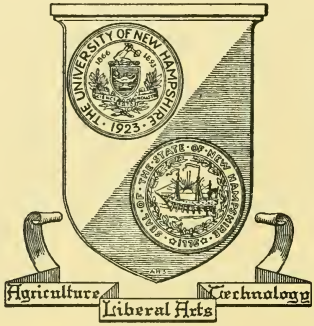
SHOUT
SHARE
IT

Library of

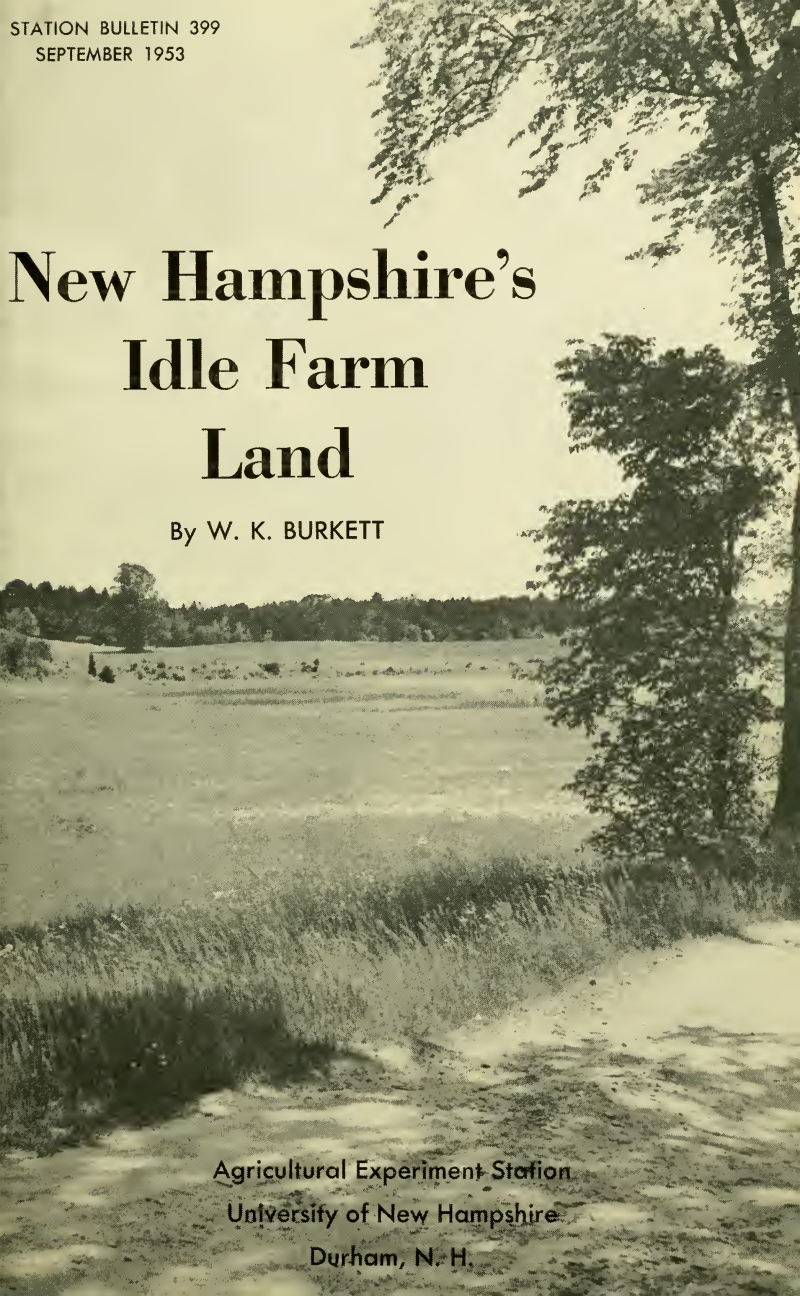


The University
of
New Hampshire

STATION BULLETIN 399
SEPTEMBER 1953

New Hampshire's Idle Farm Land

By W. K. BURKETT



Agricultural Experiment Station
University of New Hampshire
Durham, N. H.

Contents

Summary of Findings		3
Recommendations		4
Chapter I	The Background and Purpose of This Study	5
Chapter II	The Idle Land and Its Owners	10
Chapter III	Possibilities of Using Idle Farm Land	29
Chapter IV	Current Renting Practices	39
Chapter V	The Public and Private Interest in New Hampshire's Idle Farm Land	43
Appendix	Renting Practices and Terms	50

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Harry C. Woodworth, Agricultural Economist, in planning and developing this study; of John C. Holmes, Research Assistant in Agricultural Economics, in preparing the maps; and of many cooperative citizens in providing the basic data.

Summary of Findings

THE SITUATION varies somewhat from place to place (the principal variations are presented in studies of six towns), but the following general statements seem justified:

1. The 20 towns studied each had from 7 to 37 places containing idle or nearly idle farm land. There was an average of 19 such places and 631 tillable acres, plus somewhat less nonwooded pasture, per town.

2. Some of these places have enough agricultural land for a commercial size dairy farm (20 or more cows), more are of doubtful commercial size, but the greatest number are distinctly less than commercial size.

3. Such places may be found anywhere, but areas near plentiful nonfarm employment opportunities, areas offering good views and some privacy, and accessible small farm areas tend to have more agriculturally idle places.

4. The ownership of these places is varied. A few places are owned by wealthy persons, but many are owned by persons of modest means in about this order of frequency: local nonfarm workers; local and outside business and professional people, some active and some retired; women heirs of farmers; unsettled estates; retired and semiretired farmers; and others too varied to classify but probably ranking below only the first two groups in total numbers.

5. Some of the larger places were taken out of farmer ownership by persons of wealth. Others are held by persons of moderate or small means for reasons of sentiment, uncertainty, indecision, future plans, etc. Apparently a majority of the places below commercial size ceased to be farmed as they became too small for complete farm units; the rather small acreage of good land, their distance from active farms, and the value of the old farm houses have been against the incorporation of these small places into adequate size farmer-owned holdings.

6. The principal present use of most of these places is as full or part-time residence of the owner.

7. There are a few opportunities for developing dairy farm units on places now idle or nearly idle. However, on most places the farm land could best be used to supplement another farm. This applies even to the larger places because adequate buildings are seldom available for a tenant-farmer.

8. Principal reasons given by owners of idle land for not currently renting included, in order of frequency: no inquiries from renters; rented for partial use; mistrustful of renters; owner may farm in future; owner partially uses; place is for sale; and indecision as to future of place.

9. About one-third of the owners were willing to rent their farm land and about one-fourth more might be persuaded. A few farmers wanted farm units and more wanted some additional land. The farmers needing land might use the better and more conveniently located pieces now idle.

10. Owners often lack the interest or the means to make needed land improvements. Farmers tended to be willing to fertilize and reseed if they

could get a long term lease. Owners frequently indicated willingness to give a long term lease if the farmer made the improvements. Other owners would not give long term leases because of their uncertain plans.

11. Owners often have little knowledge of agriculture, of how their land might be used, or of what would be fair rental terms. Lease terms are not well established. Potential suppliers and potential users were not well known and were often reluctant to approach the other.

12. Over half of the dairy farmers in two towns were using other peoples' land in some manner. Some farmers were using several pieces of "rented" land and some were using pieces several miles away. However, much of this use is very light, leases are uncommon, most land improvements (other than on farms rented as complete units) are made by the renter and these are less than they would be if the renter's investments were more secure. An imperfectly established rental market may help limit the amount of renting.

13. Making suitable land now idle (or that may become idle) available to farmers should assist in maintaining a supply of farm products in New England at a lower cost than may otherwise be the case.

14. Many individual farmers, especially those on small farms and young men short of the capital to start farming, have opportunities to gain through the use of some idle land.

15. Many individual owners of idle farm property have opportunities to obtain current income, reduce ownership costs, or improve the sale value of their property by making it available for suitable farm use.

Recommendations

1. Individual farmers, particularly established operators of small farms and those seeking to get a start with limited capital or seeking to help sons get started, should study the possibilities in the active, moderately intensive use of rented land.

2. Individual owners of idle or semi-idle land should study the possibilities for increasing current income, decreasing current expenses, or maintaining the value of their investments through having their farm land more actively used.

3. Idle and semi-idle places need to be listed, their farm resources in land, building, etc., indicated, the owners' willingness to sell or rent determined, and the list made available to interested farmers. The information might be compiled in each town by the selectmen and made available through the County Agent's office. A similar list of interested farmers might be made available to interested nonfarmer owners.

4. Agricultural agencies, especially the Agricultural Extension Service, should publicize the opportunities in renting, the essentials of good renting, and aid in working out agreements in individual situations. Nonfarmer owners and would-be renters should feel free to seek the aid of these agencies, usually beginning at the office of the County Agricultural Agent.

5. Interested local agencies, such as town planning groups, might participate in listing idle land suitable for agriculture, interesting owners in making it available to farmers, informing farmers of its availability, and, possibly with the aid of agricultural specialists, working out suitable rental or sale agreements.

New Hampshire's Idle Farm Land

By W. K. Burkett
Associate Agricultural Economist

To whom this bulletin is addressed: This bulletin is addressed to owners of idle farm land and to farmers as potential users of such land. The incomes of both of these groups may be directly affected by whether and how this land is used. It is also addressed to the public which is interested as consumers of farm products and as viewers of the New England scene. And finally it is addressed to professional agricultural workers who are interested in the efficient use of agricultural resources and in the welfare of farmers and others.

Chapter I. The Background and Purpose of This Study

The Problem

A great many people, farmers and nonfarmers, have expressed concern that a large amount of New Hampshire's farm land, and this applies almost equally well to much of the Northeastern states region, apparently is in various stages of abandonment or disuse for agricultural purposes. The concern is common but the form which this concern takes varies widely between persons. This is not strange since individuals view the problem from different backgrounds of time and training, from different personal economic interests, and from different degrees of closeness to the problem. However, if we are to get a forward-looking, constructive point of view, we need to: (1) Find our approximate place in changing times by a brief look at trends in New Hampshire farming; (2) Analyze information which seems likely to provide a clearer picture and suggest a solution to the present problem. The second point is the main purpose of this bulletin.

Some Historical Background

Anyone who has driven on back roads in New England has seen the innumerable stone fences stretching back into the woods where once there were fields. He has also seen the old cellar holes and lilac bushes where once there were farmsteads. Historically, New England agriculture has undergone great changes.[1] One might add that the change, as far as individual farm-

[1]See, for example, (a) Wilson, H. F., *The Hill Country of Northern New England: Its Social and Economic History, 1780-1930.* Columbia University, New York, 1936. (b) Woodworth, Abell, and Holmes, *Problems in the Back Highland Areas of Southern Grafton County,* New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 298, June 1937, pp. 46-53.

steads is concerned, has been almost as great elsewhere, but in areas where the soil was better and the buildings less durable, land holdings have been regrouped and most signs of the old farmsteads have vanished. In New England the signs of the early farmsteads have often not been removed. There was no reason to do so where the farms were simply abandoned and allowed to revert from cultivated land to pasture and to trees.

Table 1. Changes in Numbers of Farms and in Acres of Farm Land for New Hampshire, 1850-1950*

Year	No. of Farms†	Acres of All Land in Farms	Acres of Tillable Land in Farms‡	Change in Acres of Tillable Land	Percent Change in Acres of Tillable Land	Acreage of Tillable Land As Per Cent of 1860 acreage (1860=100)
1850	29,229	3,392,414	2,251,488			95.1
1860	30,501	3,744,625	2,367,034	115,546	5.1	100.0
1870	29,642	3,605,994	2,334,487	–32,574	–1.4	98.6
1880	32,181	3,721,173	2,308,112	–26,375	–1.1	97.5
1890	29,151	3,459,018	1,727,387	–580,725	–25.2	73.0
1900	29,324	3,609,864	1,076,879	–650,508	–37.7	45.5
1910	27,053	3,249,458	929,185	–147,694	–13.7	39.3
1920	20,523	2,603,806	702,902	–226,283	–24.4	29.7
1925	21,065	2,262,064	632,519	–70,383	–10.0	26.7
1930	14,906	1,970,061	528,537	–103,982	–16.4	22.3
1935	17,695	2,115,548	541,448	12,911	2.4	22.9
1940	16,554	1,809,314	590,375	48,927	9.0	24.9
1945	18,786	2,017,049	509,442	–80,933	–13.7	21.5
1950	13,391	1,713,731	450,706	–58,736	–11.5	19.0

*Data from United States Census of Agriculture.

†For the 1950 Census a farm was redefined in such a way as to exclude some small places which would have been counted in 1945 and earlier. The 1950 "number of farms" was probably thus reduced considerably. "Acres of all land in farms" and "acres of tillable land in farms" would also be reduced by the definition but to a lesser extent.

‡The figures for "tillable land" up through 1920 are what the Census called "Improved land". After the 1920 Census the classification "Improved land" was dropped. The 1925 and later figures are obtained by adding "Cropland, total" and "Plowable pasture". The definitions are such that the figures should be roughly comparable and represent tillable land. Of course, some land which was tillable with oxen and hand methods might not be tillable with present machines.

Table 1 shows some of the over-all changes that have occurred in New Hampshire farm land use. The year 1860 is generally considered to be the approximate high point in New Hampshire agriculture, at least as far as total land under cultivation is concerned. Using 1860 as the basis for comparison, the number of farms has declined from 30,501 to 18,786 in 1945, and the acres of all land in farms from 3,744,625 to 2,017,049[2]. The number of farms and the total acres of land in farms are not very reliable indi-

[2]The comparison is stopped at 1945 rather than 1950 because in the latter census a farm was redefined so as to exclude many small places counted in the earlier censuses.

cators of the number of *commercial* farms or the amount of *agricultural* land, however. Because the census includes, as farms, places having as little as three acres of land or $250 of produce, the census "number of farms" may include many part-time farms or places where the farm is not the main source of income. Also, since 1860 the kind and amount of land required for a farm which is adequate for the main source of a family's income has changed considerably. "Acres of all land in farms" may include the part-time farms, and in addition does not tell whether, within farms, woods and brush have encroached on open pastures and crop land. Some measure of tillable land probably should be more reliable as an indicator of the amount of land used for agriculture. Even this, however, does not reflect the change in untillable pasture where the shrinkage probably has been great. Acres of tillable land in farms in 1945 was only a little more than one-fifth of what it was in 1860[3]. A man past 80, who still owned a hill farm, expressed the change in land use as meaningly as the above statistics. He said, "Do you see the small light patches against the dark green on the opposite mountain? Those are the only open fields that remain among the woods. I can remember when there were only a few patches of woods among the open fields over there."

A Look Toward the Future

WHAT CAUSED the decline in New Hampshire farm acreage, where are we now, and what of the future? Those are the practically interesting and forward-looking questions. In 1860, when New Hampshire's acreage of tillable land was at its highest, there were few alternatives to farming as an occupation and the hand or ox team methods of production could be used about as well in the small rough fields of upland New England as in the river valleys or even as on the Midwestern prairies. As more jobs became available in industry and commerce, and as farm machinery increased the output per farmer on the more level lands, the material level of living at non-farm jobs and on the farms better adapted to the new machinery pushed ahead of that supplied by the small, rough farms. Those who could, probably mostly the young people as they sought to become self-supporting, left the disadvantaged farms to seek occupations elsewhere which promised higher levels of living. The data in Table 1 suggest that since about 1925 the land abandonment situation has somewhat stabilized. The data in Table 2 indicate that milk production, the chief use of farm land in New Hampshire, has been maintained better than the acreage of improved land. From 1900 to 1925 milk production fell about one-third while the acreage of tillable land was falling about two-fifths. Since 1925 milk production has increased slightly while acres of improved land have decreased. Most New Hampshire farming is now in the production of products for which nearness to markets is an advantage; much of New England farm produce is no longer competing directly with that from the more level and more fertile lands farther west. Also, many of the more difficult farms have been abandoned; many of the farms that remain are at least fairly well adapted to modern farm machines. However, there is evidence that the process of abandonment and adjustment is still in progress.

---

[3]See footnote (‡) of Table 1 for what census figures were taken to reprsesent tillable land.

Since 1925 the census has included, as one part of what is here called tillable land, figures on cropland not harvested nor pastured. These figures have varied too much from census to census to establish a trend, but the 1950 figure was 59,079 acres, or 13 percent of total acres of tillable land. This is a somewhat larger percentage than in previous censuses. This land is in immediate danger of being lost to agriculture; it is here that the shrinkage in tillable land occurs.

Another sign of continued adjustment is that milk production is being maintained by fewer and larger farms. Comparing present herd sizes in several towns with those of ten years ago, the writer noted a definite tendency for farms with 5 to 10 cows to have become farms with 15 to 30 cows or to have quit dairying. Some small farms have been able to get more land or to raise the productivity of what they had. In other cases, the operator, if able, has changed to other work.

Table 2. Milk Production in New Hampshire, 1900-1945*

Census Year†	Milk Production (gallons)
1900	60,724,590
1910	44,461,042
1920	42,556,285
1925	38,149,067
1930	40,679,579
1935	42,928,454
1940	39,774,941
1945	40,214,093

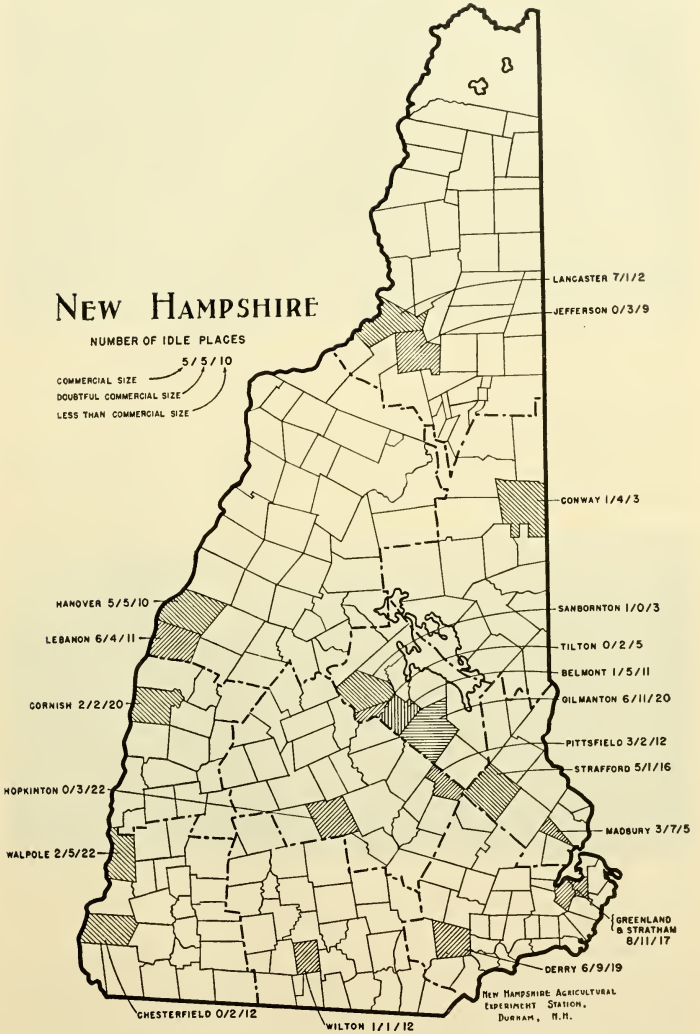
*Data from United States Census of Agriculture.

†The production year is the year previous.

This brief excursion into the history of New England farming seemed desirable to point out that in the past much land abandonment has taken place and that, in the long run, this is as it should be, if people are to seek higher standards of living. In this study of idle farm land we have tried to exclude land which cannot be farmed so as to provide the farmer with a living as good as he can obtain on other land or at other occupations. We were interested in idle land which could be profitably farmed with modern methods and without having to be reclaimed from woods.

Immediate Objectives of The Study

Noting a situation here and there has led some people to think that there might be considerable amounts of such land in various parts of the state. Some people thought large amounts might be idle due to wealthly persons buying farms for summer homes, to elderly farmers retiring on the farm, and to farm abandonment proceeding too far in some aeas. It was thought that renting of farms or farm land was not highly developed in New Hampshire and that renting, if developed, might be a means of making the idle land available for farming. Even though some land did not represent a farm unit, it might be used by farmers in the vicinity, since farm equipment has become more mobile. Indeed, much of the open idle land owned by nonfarmers might already be used to the extent of buying standing hay. But land used in this manner is already idle in the sense that hay yields gradually deteriorate, cutting is discontinued, and brush comes in. Such, in brief, were the thoughts which led to this study. The general objective of this study was to find out more definitely the extent and nature of New Hampshire's idle farm land problem, and, if possible, to make suggestions as to what might be done about it.



Map 1: The towns studied and the number of idle places by three size groups in 1948.

Chapter II. The Idle Land and Its Owners

Some description of the amount and kind of idle farm land and the nature of its ownership was obtained for 20 towns scattered over the state. It is believed that the number and scatter of these towns is sufficient to give a fairly representative picture of the idle farm land problem in the state and to some extent for New England. This information was obtained from informed local people, most often from one or more selectmen who had some acquaintance with modern farming. Besides recording information about the idle farm land and its ownership, the idle places were located on town maps which were made about ten years earlier. These maps showed the roads and the location and size (number of cows, hens, apple trees, etc.) of the farms at that time. In connection with another study, the towns on these maps have been divided into areas numbered from 1 to 7 in order (1 is best, 7 is poorest) of adaptability to dairy farming.[1] The first three numbers are for favorable areas — 1 is most favorable, 2 is very favorable, and 3 is favorable. Number 4 areas are marginal for commercial dairying. Numbers 5 and 6 are unfavorable and very unfavorable, respectively, and number 7 is non-agricultural. An area classified as favorable to dairy farming is not necessarily one which is all good farm land. It is one which is mostly suitable for dairy farms containing some variation in soils and in land uses, including tillable land, pasture, and woods.

These maps were very helpful in indicating the nature of the idle places and their location in relation to active farms. It is necessary to remember what these maps represent to understand some of the later discussion.

Figure 1. This field would qualify as "idle farm land" in this study. It is producing only a light growth of grass and weeds, but it is potentially productive, easily tilled, and of adequate size.

Definition of Idle Farm Land. Early in the inquiry it became necessary to arrive at a working definition for "idle farm land." First, what is farm land? It was indicated previously that we were not interested in land whose farming would be uneconomical. We defined what we were looking for to the selectmen-farmers as "land as good as or better than that being used

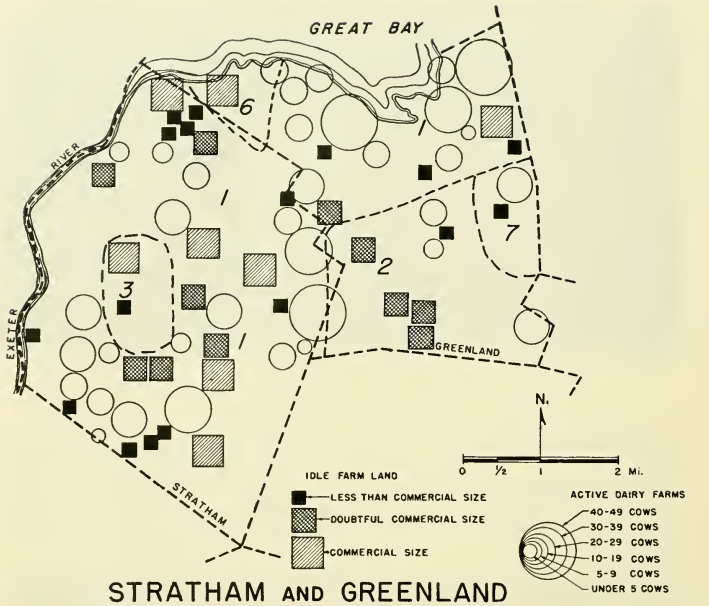
†Harry C. Woodworth and John C. Holmes, *Dairy Opportunity Areas in New Hampshire*, Bulletin 340, New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station, June 1942.

Figure 2. This field would not qualify as "idle farm land" in this study. It is too stony for cultivation and would provide little pasture.

by progressive farmers in that area, in sufficient amount to justify its use by such farmers, and which could be operated with modern equipment and methods." This is a fairly loose definition and one which may be interpreted somewhat differently by different people. However, it is one that permitted covering considerable territory with sufficient accuracy for the over-all picture.

Next, when is farm land idle? It was soon found that more land was partially idle than was completely idle. Most open land had the hay cut or a few animals pastured on it. It was decided that land would be included in the study if it were totally idle agriculturally or if it were being so lightly used that continuation of the same degree of usage could be expected to lead to agricultural abandonment in a few years — or, in simpler terms, land that was on its way out.

Size Classification of Idle Places. The places containing such land were classified into three size groups, according to how their possible agricultural use was affected by the amount of farm land in them. These sizes are defined in terms of dairy farm usage since that is the most common kind of farming requiring any large amounts of land. The groups were designated as "commercial size", "doubtful commercial size", and "less than commercial size". "Commercial size" as used here means a size of farm which appears to have sufficient tillage and pasture land to provide pasture and roughage for at least 20 cows plus young stock replacements under average intensity of use. In general, this is taken to mean at least 40 acres of tillage plus 40 acres of pasture with some allowances for obvious differences in land quality. "Doubtful commercial size" means the place *might possibly*, but probably would not, support a 20-cow herd. "Less than commercial size", of course, means the place does not have enough land to support a 20-cow herd. It is true that many dairy farms have less than 20 cows today, but forward-looking farm economists recommend that a young man intending to operate a one-man dairy farm look for a farm that will support 30 cows.



Map 2. Idle places, active dairy farms, and dairy opportunity areas in the towns of Stratham and Greenland. Dairy opportunity areas are numbered from 1, the best, to 7, the poorest.

The Picture in Six Representative Townships

THE SITUATION found in the 20 towns can be depicted more briefly and about as adequately through a treatment of six towns representing somewhat typical situations. A rather detailed description for these towns seems necessary to convey a realistic picture of the idle farm land situation.

A. Stratham and Greenland — Southeastern Towns With Good Farm Land and Strong Nonfarm Employment Alternatives

Description of the Area. Stratham and Greenland are adjoining towns in eastern Rockingham County. They border the Great Bay on the north and are one town removed from the Atlantic Coast on the east. The cities of Portsmouth, Exeter, and Newmarket are near on the northeast, southwest and northwest, respectively. New Hampshire Circular 53 classifies the type of farming as wholesale milk, hens, apples, and vegetables in that order of importance[2]. This circular says, "The most intensive type of farming (of New Hampshire) is in a small area (of which Stratham and Greenland are a part) in the extreme southeastern corner of the state. The various enterprises assume the position of a specialized business on individual farms.

[2]Harold C. Grinnell, *Type-of-Farming Areas in New Hampshire*, Station Circular 53, New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station, June, 1937.

Comparatively high milk prices and a relatively large amount of good pastures give dairying first choice in competition with other enterprises. Orcharding is a specialty on a limited number of large farms and not generally combined with dairying. This densely populated region, along with the summer trade at the beaches, offers splendid local markets for this intensive farming area. Roadside marketing assumes an important position in the selling of farm produce, the area having dense traffic and a well-developed highway system. The growing season is longer than elsewhere in the state, averaging 140 days."

New Hampshire Bulletin 340 classifies most of the area of Stratham and Greenland as "favorable for dairy farming". Most of the north half of

Table 3. Number of Unused and Partially Used Places and Acres in the Towns of Greenland and Stratham, 1948

Size Group	Number of Places in Each Size Group	Acres of Farm Land in Each Size Group	
		Tillable Land	Nonwooded Pasture
Commercial size	8	507	520
Doubtful commercial size	11	410	270
Less than commercial size	17	405	65
Total of all sizes	36	1322	855

Table 4. Principal Use and Type of Owner of Agriculturally Idle Places, Towns of Greenland and Stratham, 1948

	Number of Places		
Commercial size places	8		
Residences		8	
Farmers who lost herds on Bang's test (2 of 3 work at nonfarm jobs.)			3
Women heirs of farmers			2
Retired businessmen			2
Salesman, retired farmer			1
Doubtful commercial size places	11		
Residences		10	
Nonfarm workers			8
Businessman			1
Unsettled estate of farmer			1
No current use (for sale)		1	
Woman heir of farmer			1
Less than commercial size places	17		
Residences		12	
Nonfarm workers			4
Business and professional men			4
Farm worker			1
Retired farmer			1
Retired nonfarm worker			1
Woman heir of farmer			1
Summer homes		2	
No current use		3	
Old farm, estate long unsettled			1
Cut-over field, owned by lumberman-builder			1
Field, owner not found			1

Greenland is No. 1 (the best) and most of the south half is No. 2 (second best) dairy opportunity land. The map for Stratham classifies it as all No. 1 dairy opportunity land except for a small area of No. 3 land near the center of the town.

Number and Size of Idle Places. In Greenland there were no completely idle places but there were 11 only partially used. In Stratham there were 7 idle places and 18 partially used place. Altogether in these two towns there were 36 places with a total of 1,322 tillable acres and 855 acres of nonwooded pasture. For the two towns the total of unused and partially used places by size groups were: commercial size 8: doubtful commercial size 11; and less than commercial size 17.

Current Use and Ownership of Idle Places. The preceding section showed that there is land suitable for farm use which is idle or only partially used. What is the principal current use, if any, of these places? Who are the owners? Answers to these questions may aid our understanding of the problem of idle farm land.

Use of the house as a rural but nonfarm residence appeared to be the principal use of 30 of the 36 places. This was the case with all of the commercial size places, 10 of the 11 doubtful commercial size places, and 12 of the 17 less than commercial size places. In addition to the 30 places used as year-around residences, 2 more were used as summer homes. The remaining four had no current use. The obvious first conclusion is that residential use had outbid agricultural use for the most of these 36 places. If so, why was this the case — how had it come about?

Commercial Size Places. Of the eight commercial size places, three were occupied by families who had farmed until they had lost their herds on Bang's disease tests. The owners were holding their farms with some degree of expectation of rebuilding their herds. One family was making some progress in that direction at the time of the interview. Two of the eight were women heirs of farmers: they preferred to live in the old homestead but could not work the farms themselves and there were no members of the immediate families who cared to operate the farms. Two were owned by retired businessmen who were currently, or at the time of purchase, able to afford country estates. One was owned by a retired farmer who had not yet decided what to do with his land. These 8 places probably had the greatest potential agricultural value of the 36. Probably only one of the eight was held on the basis of the owner's present wealth alone, that is, the owner was wealthy enough to hold an idle farm without importantly affecting his level of living. The rest were held more on the basis of uncertainty, sentiment, lack of knowledge of alternatives, and indecision.

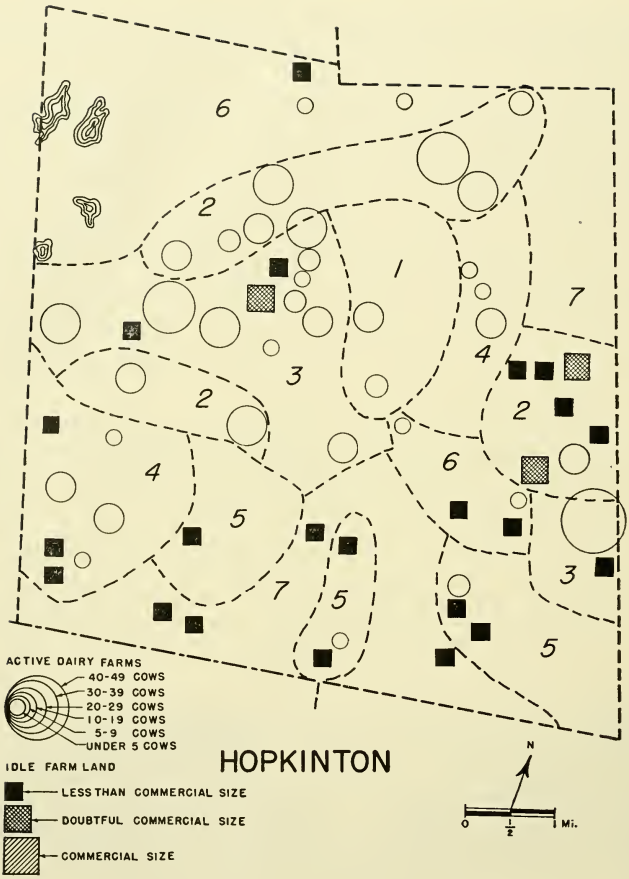
Doubtful Commercial Size Places. Of the 11 doubtful commercial size places, one was the unsettled estate of a farmer and one was for sale by the woman heir of a farmer. Both of these places seemed to have a fair chance of returning to agricultural use. One was the residence of a businessman and eight were residences of various nonfarm workers. The division between the nonfarm-work group and the business and professional group is not always clear-cut. In general, the distinction is that the nonfarm-worker group receives its income as wages. It is probably significant that in seven of these last eight situations either the present owner or his father had farmed the place as his chief occupation. There is the suggestion here that within the

last decade or two the owners of these places had come to consider that they could do better at work off the farm. Some of these people expressed the thought that they could not sell for enough to buy houses in the city and that they might return to farming if their work off the farm failed them.

Less Than Commercial Size Places. Of the 17 less than commercial size places, 3 apparently had no current use. One was an old farm which had long been an unsettled estate, one was a cut-over timber lot, and the third a field whose absentee owner was not found. None of these had usable houses. Two others of the 17 were summer homes and the remaining 12 were full-time residences. It is difficult to characterize the ownership of the residences. They ranged from moderately large, impressive buildings and grounds owned by business and professional men (about one-third could be so classified) to very moderate and even humble places owned by nonfarm workers, farm workers, retired nonfarm workers, retired farmers, and women heirs of farmers. Some places had never been farms in the memory of the persons interviewed. Others had been small general or dairy farms several decades back, and a few had recently been farms with enterprises requiring little land — such as market gardening or poultry.

Conclusions. After this review of the present use and ownership, what can we say as to why residential use has outbid agricultural use? People are trying to choose the best of their alternatives as they are able to see them and according to the individual's values. Uncertainty, and sometimes sentiment, may have caused several of the owners in the two larger size groups to hold on to their farms longer than an informed decision based on the owner's material welfare might dictate. Except for the commercial size group, the places which have been farms have, in general, been affected by two important historical and geographical factors: (1) The land of the old farms is no longer adequate for a commercial farm, but the house is often still usable; (2) The pieces of farm land are sometimes too small and scattered to permit easy and economical consolidation of ownership and use as farms.

Figure 3. This is one of the most common "idle farm land" situations: an old farm whose tillable land is less than enough for a comp'ete modern farm, an old barn no longer usable, and its total value dominated by a well-preserved old house. Ownership of these old forms is quite varied, but they are apt to be used only as non-farmer residences.



Map. 3 Idle places, active dairy farms, and dairy opportunity areas in the town of Hopkinton. Dairy opportunity areas are numbered from 1, the best, to 7, the poorest.

We shall see that these generalizations are to a considerable extent applicable to the other towns studied.

B. Hopkinton — Central Upland Town, Partly Agricultural

Description of the Area. The Town of Hopkinton is located in southern Merrimack County just west of the City of Concord. New Hampshire Circular 53 and Bulletin 340, referred to earlier, show Hopkinton as one of the agriculturally better central upland towns. New Hampshire Circular 53 classified the type of farming in 1935 as wholesale milk, apples, and hens.

Observation in connection with the present study indicates that the farm enterprises ranked in about that same order in 1948, although there may have been less combination and more specialization of enterprises in 1948. New Hampshire Bulletin 340 classifies a large north-central area as favorable for dairy farming. The detailed town map made in connection with that study shows the southern one-third of Hopkinton as No. 4 to 7 land — predominantly unfavorable to dairy farming. The central part of the northern two-thirds, on the other hand, is shown as mostly No. 1 to 3 land — predominatly favorable to dairy farming. Traveling the roads of Hopkinton one will observe that, except for the Contoocook River Valley and relatively small areas elsewhere, the topography is quite hilly. As a consequence, commercial agriculture is largely confined to the valley and to the hills with less broken slopes. Most of it is in the north central part of town.

Table 5. Number of Unused and Partially Used Places and Acres in the Town of Hopkinton, 1948

Size Group	Number of Places in Each Size Group	Acres of Farm Land in Each Size Group	
		Tillable Land	Nonwooded Pasture
Commercial size	0	0	0
Doubtful commercial size	3	90	60
Less than commercial size	22	376	44
Total of all sizes	25	466	104

Table 6. Principal Use and Type of Owner of Agriculturally Idle Places, Town of Hopkinton, 1948

	Number of Places		
Commercial size places	0		
Doubtful commercial size places	3		
Residences		3	
Semiretired farmer			1
Nonfarm worker (also keeps summer boarders)			1
Farmer's widow (summer residence only)			1
Less than commercial size places	22		
Residences		13	
Business and professional people			9
3 working locally (Concord)			
1 retired from local work			
3 working outside			
2 retired from outside work			
Nonfarm workers			2
Semiretired farmer			1
Farmer's widow			1
Summer homes		4	
Business and professional people			4
3 from outside			
1 from Concord			
Summer boarding house and residence		1	
Orchard		1	
Industrial plant		1	
No current use		2	
Farm superintendent			1
Retired part-time farmer			1

Number and Size of Idle Places. There was a total of 25 unused or partially used places in Hopkinton. Except for three places of doubtful commercial size, all had definitely less than enough currently usable agricultural land to make a commercial dairy farm. These 25 places were estimated to have a total of 466 tillable acres and 104 acres of nonwooded pasture. This is an average of less than 20 tillable acres and a little over 4 open pasture acres per place. The average total size was approximately 120 acres. Such figures suggest that these places were made up of predominantly nonagricultural land, that most of the old pasture had grown up in brush or trees, and that only the land easiest to work remained open. Observation and interviews with the owners tended to confirm this suggestion. Not only had the old pasture land been largely given up, but in some cases land listed as tillable land was now being used only as unimproved pasture.

Current Use and Ownership of Idle Places. The largest places in terms of agricultural land were three places of doubtful commercial size. The main current use of each was judged to be residential, although there were limited other uses. All three owners had made more agricultural use of their places in the past. One owner bought a farm but found it too difficult to get under way as a farmer. One was a farmer who was getting too old to operate his farm fully, and he may never have operated it very intensively. One place was held by the heirs of the last farmer; they had so far not decided what to do with it.

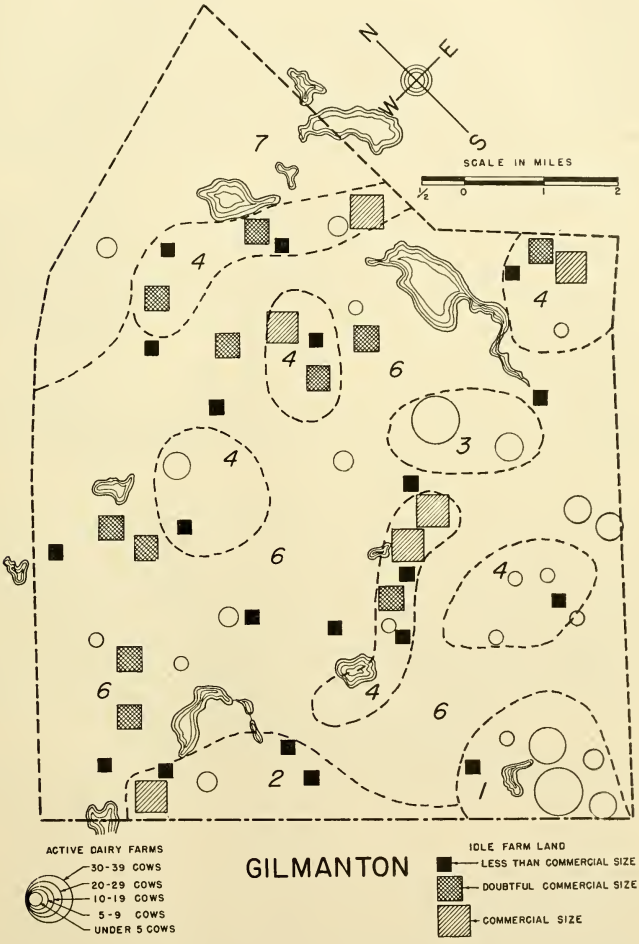
Less Than Commercial Size Places. Of the 22 less than commercial size places, 13 were currently used chiefly as full-time residences and 4 as summer homes. In addition, the two places with no current use were held partly for possible future residential use. This leaves only three other places — a fruit farm, a summer boarding place, and a factory — with some idle or semi-idle field land.

Interpretations. In Hopkinton, as in Greenland and Stratham, the chief current use of places with idle farm land is for residential purposes. Some of the ownership is similar, but other of it is markedly different. There are some owners in both areas who previously have farmed their places more actively, but there are fewer cases of real farm possibilities in Hopkinton. There are proportionally much fewer residences of nonfarm workers and proportionally many more residences of business and professional people in Hopkinton. A further difference is that approximately half the business and professional group came from a distance — such as the Boston and New York areas — to buy places in Hopkinton. Some of these are retired and some are still working outside while their families live in Hopkinton. Some had bought summer homes which they later came to use as full-time residences. Those not from "outside" work (or worked, if retired) in Concord.

Some of these residences, perhaps the majority, show signs of more than average wealth. Few, if any, however, have the appearance of the very expensive country estates sometimes seen elsewhere. For the most part the owners of these places have merely reconditioned the original house, put modern conveniences on the inside, and "spruced up" the surrounding ground and sometimes outbuildings where any remain.

An effort was made to determine historically how the nonfarmers had succeeded the farmers. Apparently most of these places had not been taken

over by nonfarmers before they were at least well along toward abandonment as farms. There seemed little question but that most of these places had no possibilities as modern farm units. However, some of the more accessible places *might* have been bought as supplemental acreage for other farms had the houses and scenery not attracted competing buyers.



Map 4. Idle places, active dairy farms, and dairy opportunity areas in the town of Gilmanton. Dairy opportunity areas are numbered from 1, the best, to 7, the poorest.

C. Gilmanton — Central Upland Town With Little Agriculture

Description of the Area. Gilmanton is located in southeastern Belknap County, one town removed from Laconia to the northwest and one from Concord to the southwest. It was the intent of this study to look into the idle farm land problem in towns which had considerable farm land. Gilmanton is among those having the least agriculture of the 20 towns studied. New Hampshire Circular 53 shows most of Gilmanton as being a part of the "highland farming" area which it described in parts as ". . . noncommercial type of farming . . . A large majority of the farms are of a general and subsistence nature. The lands are predominantly nonagricultural, the crop land soils being thin, stony and hilly; and generally cannot be made productive except at prohibitive costs. Abandoned farms are numerous. In some instances the land on unoccupied places is being used by nearby farmers for pasture and hay land. In other instances, many farms on good roads are bought for summer homes."

Gilmanton probably is not one of the least agricultural of the towns included in the highland farming area, that is, it appears to have a somewhat better agricultural potential than the above generalized description would indicate. But, as can be seen in Map 4, its farms tend to be small and rather thinly scattered. New Hampshire Bulletin 340 shows Gilmanton as predominantly nonagricultural for dairying but with some relatively small areas marked as favorable and some as marginal for dairy farming. The five spots of No. 4 land are marginal. The one spot each of Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are considered favorable.

Gilmanton is a hilly town, but not all the slopes are extremely steep. Orchards are among its more important farm enterprises. Its rural character, several small lakes, and some fine views probably make it attractive for rural residences and summer homes.

Number and Size of Idle Places. Of the 37 idle or nearly idle places in Gilmanton, 6 were classified as having farm land to support a commercial dairy enterprise, 11 as being of doubtful commercial size, and 20 as being less than commercial size. Those places were estimated to contain a total of 1,303 acres of tillable land. The two groups of larger size also included about 575 acres of nonwooded pasture. There was little open pasture on the places of less than commercial size. Probably some of them had never been farms while on others brush had taken over the old pastures. The commercial size places averaged about 65 acres of tillable land and about 60 acres of pasture, while the places of doubtful commercial size averaged about 45

Table 7. Number of Unused and Partially Used Places and Acres in the Town of Gilmanton, 1948

Size Group	Number of Places in Each Size Group	Acres of Farm Land in Each Size Group	
		Tillable Land	Nonwooded Pasture
Commercial size	6	395	350
Doubtful commercial size	11	445	225
Less than commercial size	20	463	*
Total of all sizes	37	1303	575†

*Little — amount not obtained.

†Exceeds 575 acres by amount not given at *.

Table 8. Principal Use and Type of Owner of Agriculturally Idle Places, Town of Gilmanton, 1948

	Number of Places		
Commercial size places	6		
Residences		3	
Unsettled estate			1
Retired businessman-farmer			1
Part-time residence of businessman and sometime farmer			1
No current use		3	
Bank			1
Lumberman			1
Retired businessman-farmer			1
Doubtful commercial size places	11		
Residences		5	
Nonfarm workers			2
Businessmen (local)			2
Retired farmer			1
Summer homes		4	
Business and professional people			2
Nonfarm worker			1
Occupation unknown			1
Summer boarding house		1	
No current use		1	
Heirs of estate			1
Less than commercial size	20		
Residences		8	
Nonfarm workers			4
Business and professional people			2
Inactive farmer			1
Occupation unknown			1
Summer homes		7	
Business and professional people			3
Occupation unknown			4
Summer guest house		1	
No current use		4	
Nonfarm workers			2
Occupation unknown			2

acres of tillable land and about 11 acres of pasture. The places of less than commercial size averaged about 23 acres of tillable land only. The smaller open pasture acreages on the smaller places are in agreement with the probable earlier abandonment of the smaller places as farms.

Gilmanton evidently has many more idle places than it has active dairy farms. In four north and eastern spots of No. 4 (marginal) dairy opportunity land, the places shown as active dairy farms on the 1937 map were nearly all idle by 1948. The situation is not much better in the rest of the town.

Some of the selectmen expressed the view that state aid for roads had come too late for agriculture in the northern part of Gilmanton. The town has a large road mileage relative to its assessed valuation. This evidently had a doubly discouraging effect on agriculture: (1) The difficulty of getting out products, especially milk, and the inconveniences of living on bad roads; and (2) the high property tax on farms for such road building and maintenance as was accomplished.

Current Use and Ownership of Idle Places. A clear pattern of the current use and ownership of the agriculturally idle and nearly idle places is less evident in Gilmanton than in Greenland and Stratham, or in Hopkinton. Year around residence is still the most frequent single use (16 places), but summer home use is a close second (11 places), and "no current use" (8 places) is more frequent than in the towns previously discussed.

Commercial Size Places. Two of the commercial size places were owned by a retired businessman who farmed them some at one time. Another of these places is owned by a businessman who has sometimes operated it as a farm. The other three owners of commercial size farms consisted of a bank, a lumberman, and the heirs of an unsettled estate. High purchasing power could have been a factor in ownership of the first three places. Fairly low selling value is almost equally suggested in the latter three cases. One probably should conclude that, although strong purchasing power was available in the first three cases, it is not generally necessary to take some of these places out of agriculture.

Doubtful Commercial Size Places. The owners of the full-time residences on the doubtful commercial size places included two nonfarm workers, two local businessmen, and one retired farmer. These probably are not wealthy people. Evidently they liked to live in the country or housing was scarce in the cities and villages. Probably these places would be valued primarily as residences and their farm land would not add greatly to their price.

Less Than Commercial Size Places. Nonfarm workers made up the largest single group of owners for residential use in the smallest size group.

Five of the eleven summer home owners' occupations were not known by the selectmen. Five of the remaining six were business and professional people. Some were of ordinarily moderate income occupations, however.

D. Lancaster — Northern Connecticut Valley Town With Strong Agriculture and Little Competitive Land Use

Description of the Area. The Town of Lancaster is located in southwestern Coos County. Compared with the four towns previously discussed, it is located so as to be influenced less by New Hampshire urban centers, and it is somewhat more remote of access from the larger urban areas of the states to the south. The location makes for relatively weak rural residence, summer home, and hobby farm demand. On the other hand, Lancaster probably has larger areas of land suitable for agriculture than the towns previously discussed, with the possible exception of the Greenland-Stratham area. Although parts of Lancaster are from hilly to mountainous, it is favored by the Connecticut River Valley and by a large tributary valley.

Relative lack of nonfarm job alternatives in Lancaster, as compared with Greenland and Stratham, may also be a factor toward a stronger agriculture in Lancaster.

New Hampshire Circular 53 includes Lancaster in a wholesale milk type of farming area which is described in part as follows: "Although the production of milk for a wholesale market constitutes the major farm enterprise in most agricultural areas of the state, there are no areas in which it reaches such a high degree of specialization as in the towns adjacent to the Connecticut River. However, there are a limited number of potato growers in these areas and some farmers have maple products to sell. Crop lands adjacent to the river are of the better quality soils, being mainly valley ter-

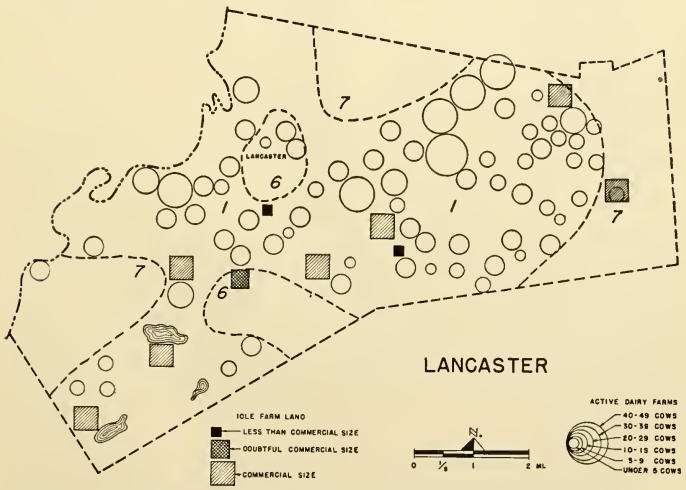
races and bottom lands. As one travels eastward from the river, the soils give way to those of fair quality on more rolling lands, and thence to fair quality lands, hilly and moderately stony." Probably what was said of the soils of the valley of the Connecticut itself could also be applied to the main tributary valleys.

New Hampshire Bulletin 340 shows the larger part of Lancaster as favorable for dairy farming. The town map made in connection with the above studies shows Lancaster as about two-thirds No. 1 dairy opportunity land but with five areas of Nos. 6 and 7 land around the edges and around the village of Lancaster.

Number and Size of Idle Places. Although a rather large town and one with numerous farms, Lancaster had a total of only 10 idle or nearly idle places. However, of these, a relatively large number (seven) were classified as commercial size. Moreover, some of these seven places were fairly large — the seven averaging over 90 acres of tillable land and 70 acres of non-wooded pasture (for the four places whose pasture was estimated). The high proportion of commercial size places may be related to the relatively vigorous agriculture of the town. In the first place, there are proportionately fewer small farms to become idle, and in the second place the idle status of some of these farms may be only a time of transition between active ownerships.

Current Use and Ownership of Idle Places. As compared to the four towns previously discussed. a small proportion of all the idle places (four of the ten) are used principally as residences.

Commercial Size Places. Probably a larger proportion of the better places are more likely to be used in the near future than was the case in the



Map 5. Idle places, active dairy farms, and dairy opportunity areas in the town of Lancaster. Dairy opportunity areas are numbered from 1, the best, to 7, the poorest.

Table 9. Number of Unused and Partially Used Places and Acres in the Town of Lancaster, 1948

Size Group	Number of Places in Each Size Group	Acres of Farm Land in Each Size Group	
		Tillable Land	Nonwooded Pasture
Commercial size	7	655	280*
Doubtful commercial size	1	50	40
Less than commercial size	2	60	†
Total of all sizes	10	765	320‡

*Pasture acreage of three of the seven places not obtained.
†Pasture acreage not obtained.
‡Exceeds 320 acres by amount omitted at * and †.

Table 10. Principal Use and Type of Owner of Agriculturally Idle Places, Town of Lancaster, 1948

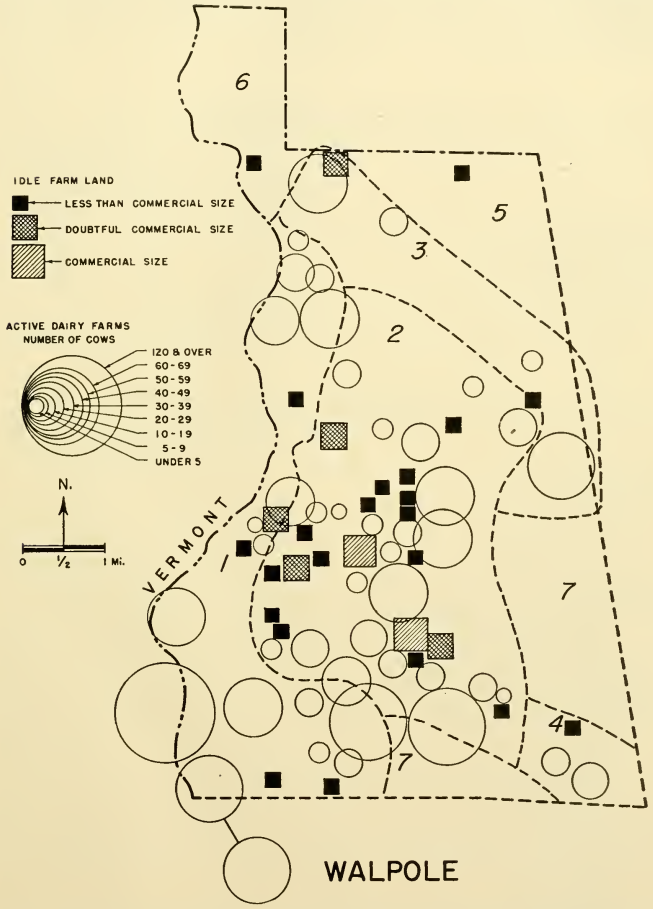
	Number of Places		
Commercial size places	7		
Residences		3	
Retired businessman			1
Retired farmer			1
Absentee owner (2 houses rented)			1
Hobby		1	
Professional man			1
Cattle quarters		1	
Trader			1
No current use		2	
Businessman			1
Nonfarm worker			1
Doubtful commercial size	1		
No current use		1	
Professional man			1
Less than commercial size	2		
Residence		1	
Nonfarm worker			1
Summer home		1	
Retired, former occupation not obtained			1

four previous towns. Of the seven places of commercial size, two are for sale (but have been for some time), a third is partially used by a trader as a place to keep cattle and may be for sale, and the owner of a fourth place has some plans toward farming. A fifth place is owned by a nonfarmer to keep the old home place in the family, but it has been and probably could be rented as a farm. The remaining two of the places of commercial size, although having sufficient acreage, have some physical handicaps as farms; one is nearly inaccessible in winter while the other is made up of two former small farms with two houses (rented), one barn, and has too many rocks for the easiest operation.

Doubtful Commercial Size Places. The one place of doubtful commercial size is also rather rocky. It ceased to be farmed when the buildings burned. Some farms may be economic while the present buildings are usable, but when they are gone the farm may not justify rebuilding. There may also be some

farms on which rebuilding would be justified but on which for one reason or another it is delayed long enough for the place to seriously deteriorate as a farm.

Less Than Commercial Size Places. Both of the places of less than commercial size were small active farms a decade or more ago. In one case the previous farmer's son turned to nonfarm work, probably making the correct economic choice that the small home farm was not his best income al-



Map 6. Idle places, active dairy farms, and dairy opportunity areas in the town of Walpole. Dairy opportunity areas are numbered from 1, the best, to 7, the poorest.

ternative. In the other case the last farmer received a good offer for his place to be used as a summer home.

Some Other Land Use Signs. There are other signs of whether agriculture is thriving and competing successfully for land use. In Lancaster a few farms had less cows in 1948 than in 1941 and some with very few cows in 1941 had none at all in 1948, but several farms had *more* cows in 1948 than in 1941 and some farmers are using considerable land outside their own farms. Altogether, Lancaster seemed to be in a relatively healthy agricultural condition with only a few symptoms of land use problems which are more acute in some towns.

Table 11. Number of Unused and Partially Used Places and Acres in the Town of Walpole, 1948.

Size Group	Number of Places in Each Size Group	Acres of Farm Land in Each Size Group	
		Tillable Land	Nonwooded Pasture
Commercial size	2	95	95
Doubtful commercial size	5	150	110*
Less than commercial size	22	468	195*
Total of all sizes	29	713	400*

*Nonwooded pasture acres for the two smaller size groups may be incomplete.

Table 12. Principal Uses and Types of Owners of Agriculturally Idle Places, Town of Walpole, 1948

	Number of Places	
Commercial size places	2	
Residence	1	
Part-time farmer		1
Summer home	1	
Professional man		1
Doubtful commercial size places	5	
Residences	4	
Business and professional men		2
Nonfarm worker		1
Farmer's widow		1
Residence and cattle quarters	1	
Trader		1
Less than commercial size places	22	
Residences	13	
Nonfarm workers		6
Business and professional men		4
Retired farmers		2
Farmer's widow		1
Summer homes	4	
Occupation unknown		4
Poultry farms	2	
No current use	3	
Cattle dealer		1
Occupation unknown		1
Unsettled estate		1

E. Walpo'e — Southern Connecticut River Valley Town With Fairly Strong Agriculture and Competitive Land Use

Description of the Area. The Town of Walpole is located in the northwest corner of Cheshire County. North of the village of Walpole the Connecticut River Valley is too narrow in places for even a single row of valley farms. South of the village the valley widens sufficiently to make room for a few large dairy farms. Most of Walpole's farms are in the upland — on its broader, less steep hills and in the small valleys between the hills. The general description of the type of farming and nature of the soil quoted in the description of Lancaster also applies to Walpole. There are important differences, however. Walpole lacks the large tributary valley so that her farms away from the river are generally somewhat rougher, smaller, and more scattered.

New Hampshire Bulletin 340 shows at least two-thirds of Walpole favorable for dairy farming. The detailed town map shows a strip along the river as No. 1 (except for the north end), a large central area as No. 2, a north central strip as No. 3, and the remainder as No. 4 to No. 7-land which is from marginal and unfavorable for dairy farming to nonagricultural.

Number and Size of Idle Places. As compared with Lancaster, Walpole has a large number (29) of idle or nearly idle places. However, 22 of the 29 were classified as less than commercial size, five as doubtful commercial size, and only two as commercial size. After studying a number of towns one comes to expect more idle places where there are, or have been, more numerous small hill farms such as there are in Walpole as compared with Lancaster.

Current Use and Ownership of Idle Places. In Walpole residential use of agriculturally idle places is again by far the most frequent, 18 of the 29 places being used principally as residences. Decidedly second is summer homes with 5 of the 29 places so used.

Commercial Size Places. One of the commercial size places is used principally as the residence of a part-time farming family which once farmed it on a commercial scale. The other commercial size place passed into ownership for summer home use when the last farmer was unable to fully reestablish himself after a fire.

Doubtful Commercial Size Places. Four of the five doubtful commercial size places are used principally as residences and it is one of the principal uses of the fifth. It is perhaps of some significance that four of the five owners (the fifth is a farmer's widow) bought their places with some intention to farm and have farmed these places more intensively (three cases) or have some intention of doing so (one case). Apparently they have underestimated the difficulties or over-estimated the rewards as compared to alternative uses of their time and funds.

Less Than Commercial Size Places. Of the 22 less than commercial size places, 13 are used principally as residences, four as summer homes, two as poultry farms, and three had no current use. A few of the residential places have been used by their present owners for small farms with intensive type enterprises such as poultry. More of them were small dairy farms several years ago. These small dairy farms changed to nonfarmer ownership when their operators died or retired. At this stage potential buyers (or sellers in case of heirs) judged them more valuable as residences than as farms.

Two of the four summer homes in this size group were likewise small farms before passing into summer home ownership — one at the death of the farmer, the other after it had been allowed to deteriorate as a farm. The other two summer homes have houses on the mansion scale. Each of them once included considerably more land and was operated as a wealthy country place farm. There are still several places in Walpole which are owned somewhat as country estates or hobby farms and are operated by hired caretakers, managers, laborers, renting operators, or some combination or variation of these. The country estate or hobby farm tendency is much stronger in Walpole than in the towns described earlier.

Two active poultry farms have some land used only to the extent of selling standing hay.

Of the three currently idle places, one was bought by a cattle dealer for pasture, one was bought and started as a hog farm when the house burned, while the third is an unsettled estate with an expensive house.

In summary, Walpole is a town with an active agriculture including many commercial dairy farms but also having strong competitive uses of farm land. Most important of the competitive uses are residences for all sorts of local people, summer homes for outside people, and hobby farms or country estates of outsiders and some local people. The hobby farms or country estates do not all result in idle farm land but they are competitors of commercial "dirt" farmers for land ownership and use.

Summary of Chapter II

THE SIX TOWNS, including two in the seacoast area, two in the central upland, and two along the Connecticut River Valley, had from 10 to 37 idle or nearly idle pieces of farm land each. In the six towns there were 23 idle places with land enough for a commercial dairy farm, 31 places of doubtful commercial size, and 83 places of definitely less than commercial size. In only Lancaster, the town farthest north and most remote from both New Hampshire and outside urban influence and with relatively good agricultural land, did the number of idle places and nature of their ownership make the

Figure 4. Within several miles of urban centers many of the smaller, and some of the larger, old farms are used only as residences of various city workers, while new residences and potential residential sites compete further for land use.

problem appear minor. Elsewhere various kinds of nonfarm rural residences were competing strongly with agriculture for land use.

In the majority of cases (probably most of the 83 small pieces and the 31 places of doubtful commercial size) residential use won by default on the part of agriculture. These places have become too small for farm units. At some critical stage, such as death or retirement of an old farmer, the loss of a barn by fire, or perhaps when a younger man sees a better opportunity, the places with less than enough good land pass into nonfarm use. Possibly more of them would be consolidated into active farms but for two common obstacles: The distance between the good pieces of land, and the relatively large associated amounts of nonagricultural property, especially the well-built old houses. There are many individual variations explaining the idleness of the two smaller sizes, but this thread runs through most of them.

In the case of the commercial size places the *positive* action of demand for nonfarm and "hobby farm" use is more evident. Even here, however, the owners are not infrequently farmers' heirs, exfarmers, and others of apparently very modest means whose continued ownership of nearly idle places of commercial size is probably due to a combination of sentiment and a weak market for farms, especially after they have been allowed to run down.

Usually local people predominate among the owners of agriculturally idle places. This is almost exclusively so in Greenland and Stratham. In Hopkinton, Gilmanton, and Walpole summer home owners are also present in considerable numbers. Some families come first for the summer, then, except for the actively employed members, become established as year around residents. In Walpole hobby farms are rather numerous. Most of those in Walpole were making active use of their land, but in other of the 20 towns they were a fairly common stage toward idleness of commercial size places.

Chapter III. Possibilities of Using Idle Farm Land

THE PRECEDING chapter showed that there is considerable idle or nearly idle farm land in New Hampshire. It also showed something about the size of these places, their current use, and the nature of their ownership. The second major phase of this study concerns whether and how this land might be more actively used for agriculture. Conceivably the idle land might be farmed by the present owners, by farmers now operating in the vicinity, or by people who would take up farming in the vicinity. As noted earlier, some of the present owners of idle farm land have had or do have some intention of farming. Some of these potential farmers might succeed if assisted with appropriate advice and credit. Others might not have bought farm land had they been more adequately acquainted with the problems of operating it. However, for the most part we will take for granted either long or short term ownership by nonfarmers and inquire into whether or how the agricultural land could be made available to farmers. There is a considerable movement of farmers from one area to another and there are new farmers becoming established each year. Neither of these, however, are apt to be nearly as numerous as the established local farmers and they would be difficult to locate in a study of this kind. Both because of their greater numbers and because of practical research considerations we will be concerned mostly with the possibilities of present local farmers using the idle land.

Effect of Size and Current Use

THERE WAS A total of 137 agriculturally idle or nearly idle places in the six towns just reviewed. Eighty-three (60 percent) of these were definitely less than commercial size as dairy farms. These would have to be ruled out as places where a farmer could establish a complete farm unit. It is true that farmsteads might be established on them if additional land were available elsewhere. However, most farmers probably would be justifiably reluctant to make heavy farmstead investments on such small places without control of additional land. This leaves 31 (23 percent) of the places with probably not quite enough land for a 20-cow farm, and 23 (17 percent) with enough usable land. It will be recalled that most of these places were currently used principally as residences. In most cases they were the residences of the owners. Only 10 of the 54 places in the two larger farm size groups had buildings currently available for a farm operator — if we assume that the current use of buildings would not be given up. Thus it appears that not only the less than commercial size places, which are in the majority, but also most of the larger places would have little chance of being used except by farmers operating from other farmsteads.

Table 13. Availability of Buildings Needed for Farm Units on Places of Possible Commercial Size

Town	Size of Places	Number of Places	Number of Places on which Buildings May be Available to a Tenant Farmer
Greenland and Stratham	Commercial size	8	2
	Doubtful commercial size	11	0
Hopkinton	Commercial size	0	0
	Doubtful commercial size	3	0
Gilmanton	Commercial size	6	3
	Doubtful commercial size	11	1
Lancaster	Commercial size	7	4
	Doubtful commercial size	1	0
Walpole	Commercial size	2	0
	Doubtful commercial size	5	0
Total of 6 towns	Commercial size	23	9
	Doubtful commercial size	31	1

The next pertinent questions are: What are the attitudes of owners toward making their agricultural land available to farmers? What are the attitudes of active farmers toward using this land? In three towns — Greenland, Stratham, and Hopkinton — an effort was made to contact all owners of idle farm land and all active farmers to obtain their attitudes on several points related to possible land use. It is believed that attitudes toward these points would not be greatly different in other towns.

Attitudes of Owners

IN TABLE 14 the places are classified according to the owners' direct or indirect answers as to why their land was not currently rented for farm use. Probably in most cases more than a single consideration was involved, but an effort was made to select the most direct, strategic, or deciding factor involved.

1. Reasons For Not Currently Renting For Active Farm Use

The single most frequently given reason was that there was no demand for land to rent — no one had inquired about renting their farm land. Probably also a *weak* demand (a low rental) was a background factor in most of the other cases; some of the miscellaneous reasons for not currently renting might have been overcome if rentals were higher. The next most frequent reason for not currently renting for *active* farm use was that someone had been making partial use of the land, such as putting cultivated crops on a fraction of the tillable land or cutting such hay as continued to grow without reseeding or fertilization. In a smaller number of cases the owner himself was making partial use of the farm land. These partially used places were not being used intensively enough to prevent fairly rapid deterioration of their farm land. The third most common reason for not currently renting seemed to be mistrust of renters. Most of the cases of mistrust were in connection with less than commercial size places where owners did not want others near their buildings or thought grass land might be left unseeded or cattle might not be adequately fenced in. Some farmers at the retirement

Table 14. Principal Reasons for Owners Not Currently Renting Their Land for Active Farm Use

Principal Reasons	Number in Greenland and Stratham	Number in Hopkinton	Number in All Three Towns
No demand for land to rent	7	8	15
Rented for partial use	7	4	11
Mistrustful of renters	4	3	7
Owner may farm in future	4	2	6
Owner partially uses	3	2	5
For sale	2	2	4
Indecision concerning future of place	1	2	3
Unsettled estate	2	0	2
Lease held by inactive farmer	1	0	1
Not worthwhile to rent	0	1	1
Reason not obtained	5	1	6

stage were doubtful that a renter would farm their places well and protect their property. The fourth most frequent reason was the possibility or intention of the owner himself farming. Sometimes this intention had been long delayed or the possibility did not seem immediate. The for sale, unsettled estate, and indecision cases might be lumped together (a total of nine) as transition situations. If the transition periods are short they are of little significance, but if they are prolonged the land may reach the stage where it is usable only after expensive improvements.

2. Owners' Willingness To Rent

Of the 61 owners in the three towns, 21 were willing to rent, 13 were uncertain, 19 were unwilling, and the attitude of 8 was not obtained. Three of the eight owners of commercial size places were not interested in renting — two because they expected to farm again while the third was an unsettled estate. In two of these three cases it probably would be to the owners' advantage to have the farms used in the interval. The same would probably also be true for the two uncertain owners of commercial size places.

One of these uncertain owners expected to farm again. The other was a retired farmer who had not decided what to do with his farm.

Four of the 14 owners of doubtful commercial size farms were not interested in renting them. One was a part-time farmer making partial use of his land, one expected to farm again, and one was holding his place for sale. The fourth did not think a renter would take good care of his place and he, an old man and widower, was still doing a little farming. Three more owners of doubtful commercial size places were uncertain of their willingness to rent. One of the places was for sale, one was an estate in transition, and the third was an estate in which the heirs had not decided what to do with the farm in the three years since the owner died.

Table 15. Owners' Willingness to Rent in Three Towns*

Size of Place	Willing	Uncertain	Unwilling	Attitude Unknown
Commercial Size	3	2	3	0
Doubtful Commercial Size	7	3	4	0
Less than Commercial Size	11	8	12	8
All sizes	21	13	19	8

*Greenland, Stratham, and Hopkinton.

Twelve of the 39 owners of less than commercial size were unwilling to rent. The reasons included: mistrust of renters in four cases, owner's partial use in three cases, owner's intent to use in two cases, desire to sell in two cases, and renting not worthwhile in one case — the fields were around the house and little rent was expected. Eight owners of less than commercial size places were uncertain about renting. The reasons included: mistrust of renters in three cases, possible sale in two cases, rented for partial use in two cases, and need to consider in one case.

Interpretations. Very few of these reasons unquestionably exclude the possibility that the owner might gain financially by renting. However, if rentals or gains in value of land due to renting are very small, the owner may not feel them sufficient to compensate for even slight inconvenience associated with renting. Several of the reasons imply that the owner is reluctant to make any commitment which would at all conflict with his freedom of choice with respect to future use or disposal of his land. If these owners have full knowledge of their alternatives, including possible income from renting, then the rental value of their farm land is low or the value of a fluid situation is high. This may well be the case on places with small pieces of farm land and high residential or other value.

There are some indications, however, that not all are operating with a full knowledge of their alternatives — especially they may not know what is involved if they are to farm successfully themselves or what is involved in either costs and income if the places are to be rented successfully. However, as long as the unwillingness to make commitments exists, it creates a serious obstacle to renting since most idle land is not immediately productive and would require a few years to make it so. There may be situations where it is *temporarily* advantageous for either owner or renter to make partial use of land. Such use cannot be advantageous in the long run, however, since it is by definition here a degree of use less than optimum and less than necessary to retain the land in agriculture.

Mistrust may be justified between some owners and some renters. However, a great many people have carried out the owner-tenant relationship more or less satisfactorily and there is no obvious reason why mistrust should be an impossible obstacle between well meaning parties. *What seems principally needed is some understanding of and respect for the other person and his interests.* Some would-be renters may not respect as much as they might the rural residents' desire for privacy, for having his premises kept neat and clean, for keeping the cows *inside* the pasture, and for leaving hayland seeded at the end of the lease. On the other hand some nonfarmer rural residents may expect too many services from a busy farmer or may not cooperate as they should because of not understanding the significance of some farm operations. Unquestionably there often is a considerable gap in understanding between active farmers and owners of idle farm land. Both parties might well work at improving this understanding, but the impartial assistance of third parties who appreciate both points of view could hasten the narrowing of the gap.

3. Rent Required By Owners

Most of the owners of idle farm land did not know what rent they would require or they were unwilling to say. Apparently they really had very little idea of what their land should rent for since they had little acquaintance with farming, and, as we shall see later, it is not easy to arrive at a reasonable rental figure in many situations.Some indicated that they would be willing to have their land used rent free, at least for a period, in return for improvement practices such as plowing, seeding, and fertilizing. Current renting practices are discussed in Chapter IV.

4. Owners' Attitudes Toward Improvements

A desirable modern New England dairy farm requires many things besides raw land of potential agricultural value. If it is to be used as a farm unit, it should have at least these additional things: a house with the princi-

Figure 5. Fields on which standing hay is sold gradually reach the stage where the hay is not worth cutting and brush takes over. Where the non-farmer owner is unable to reseed and fertilize, a local farmer who is short of land may be willing to make those improvements, if compensated by low rent and the security of a long lease.

pal conveniences, a barn which not only protects the animals and feed but also meets sanitary regulations and is economical of the operator's time, adequate and convenient water, permanent or movable fences for the livestock, and pasture and crop land relatively free of brush and stones, well drained, and maintained in a relatively high state of productivity by fertilizers and reseeding. All of the above types of improvements are needed on a place which is to be used as a complete dairy farm unit. On places to be used as supplemental land by farmers with separate farmsteads, the land improvements are essential on tillage land (land for hay, silage, etc.), while fencing is essential and appropriate land improvements highly desirable on pasture land.

The provision and maintenance of these so-called improvements require a considerable investment of money and labor on the part of someone. It is not assumed that they should be made unless they will add more to income than their cost. Of course, if certain improvements would be maintained whether they are used for farm purposes or not, the owner need consider only whether the *additional expense for farm use* will be covered by increased farm income. This situation may often occur on places which are owned at least in part for nonfarm uses, as is the case in nearly all instances of idle farm land.

What were the attitudes of the owners of idle farm land toward making improvements needed if their places were to be farmed? Owners' responses appeared so dependent on their individual farm and personal circumstances as to make an enumeration of their answers of little use. Some generalizations may be made, however, from listening to a large number of comments. These comments are not confined to owners in the three towns from which the above data on owners' attitudes were obtained. Let us consider first the provision and maintenance of improvements on places which might be used as *farm units*. Those owners who have an active interest in farming and who have the means (these are most apt to be business or professional men who are interested in farms at least partly as earning investments) are generally willing to provide needed buildings, fences, and other more permanent improvements. They are generally also willing to at least share in the land improvements, depending somewhat on the extent to which they add to the long-time value of the farm. For instance, the owner would provide tile drainage but the renter might share in the cost of lime. They generally expect the renter to at least share in the cost of land improvements which are of a more temporary nature and from which the full benefit is expected during the life of the lease. This applied particularly to fertilizers and seed. Obtaining improvements in this kind of farm situation is not too great a problem. Persons interested in working out the details to fit particular situations can get advice and lease forms from their county agricultural agent or from the agricultural extension service of their state college of agriculture.

Unfortunately the problem of needed improvements is not so easily solved in the great majority of cases. Probably a majority of the owners on even the places with enough agricultural land for a dairy farm unit *lack* either the strong interest or the ready means to make the necessary changes. Retired farmers and women heirs of farmers often lack funds to make improvements, well-to-do nonfarmer owners often lack interest and "know-how", less well-to-do nonfarmer owners may lack interest, know-how, and funds, and all nonfarming owners are likely to lack the equipment some-

times needed. Also. owners sometimes mentioned that there was no assurance they could keep their places rented and thus recover investment in improvements.

Most of the barns have both deteriorated and become obsolete. They would not provide adequate shelter nor meet sanitary regulations, and they would be wasteful of the operator's time. Moreover, many of these places are virtually ruled out as possible farm units because the house is used as the owner's residence. Let us consider, then, attitudes toward improvements needed if the land *only* is to be used.

Fencing is somewhat intermediate between buildings and soil improvements in degree of permanency. Most owners of less than farm unit size places were not willing to fence their pasture land. Reasons include lack of funds, fear that the place could not be kept rented long enough for the investment to pay off, and unwillingness to be bothered. Probably some of the unwillingness was also due to knowledge that the renter often puts up and maintains fences.

Most owners of less than farm unit size places were also unwilling to make soil improvements. Their reasons were similar to those for not fencing their pasture land. In addition they did not usually have the equipment and sometimes not the labor force or the know-how to put into effect the improvements. However, most of those who were willing to rent at all were willing to give a long term (about five years) lease with low rent to permit the renter to lime, fertilize, and reseed. Some would allow the land to be used a few years rent free in order to have its future productivity improved. A few owners expressed concern that renters might not carry through on a long term lease, that the old grass might be plowed up and not reseeded. This particularly bothered owners whose fields were around their houses.

The interviewer gained the impression that *important to interesting the owners in renting and to working out rental terms were considerations of confidence and understanding. If the owner had confidence in the would-be renter's integrity and ability, the land probably could be rented, and if the*

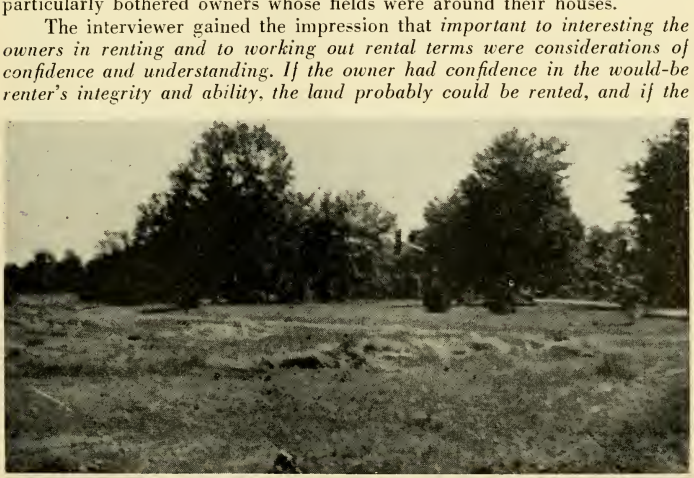


Figure 6. Non-farmer rural residents and summer home owners often have some acreage which they would like to keep open as a fire protection and to enlarge the view. If the hay stand is not improved, the owners would have to pay to have the hay removed. If the land is worthwhile, a neighboring farmer might rent the land at terms beneficial to both.

need for improvements and methods of supplying them were explained, then satisfactory arrangements probably could be made. The promotion of such understandings between owners of idle land and farmers might be carried out on both a general and an individual level by interested organizations. Again, interested owners and farmers should feel free to call on their county agent and their college of agriculture for assistance.

5. Owners' Attitudes Toward Selling

For the most part this study takes for granted the present ownership. However, one possibility for idle land being made available to farmers is through purchase by active farmers. Several owners showed some interest in selling. Most of these were interested in selling their places in their entirety rather than selling the farm land separately. This applied especially to owners of the smaller places whose farm land was often near the house. Owners of rural residences or summer homes generally wish to keep control of nearby land to prevent its use for purposes undesirable to them. Farmers could not afford to buy these small places for farm land use alone because of the high value of the houses in relation to the land. Owners of larger places, too, sometimes preferred to sell their places intact. Sometimes this appeared to be due to a mistaken conception of the adequacy of the place as a commercial farm or to overlooking the possibility of realizing a higher total from a divided sale. In instances where there is not too much competition from hobby farmers, nearby farmers might buy the larger places for their farm land and resell the houses with their nearby land for nonfarm uses. This, of course, involves a larger problem of financing than if farmers could buy the agricultural land separately.

Attitudes of Farmers

In Greenland, Stratham, and Hopkinton the interviewer stopped at every place which showed any signs of being a farm of a kind using any considerable amount of land. For the most part this meant dairy farms, although it included some orchards and vegetable farms. Inquiry was made as to the kind and size of farm, whether the farmer thought he needed more land, the kind and amount of such land, whether he would prefer to buy or rent the needed land, what lease terms would be agreeable, how far he would go for land, and whether he knew of suitable land. This approach, of course, excluded some potential users of idle land, namely, active nearby farmers outside the town boundaries and persons desiring to begin farming.

1. Land Wants of Active Farmers

In Greenland and Stratham there were two farmers wanting complete farms, and eight, representing 11 families, who wanted some acreage to supplement their present farms.[1] In Hopkinton one farmer wanted a complete farm, and six, representing nine adult males, wanted supplemental land. Of those wanting complete farms, two were hired farm operators and one was a part-time farmer. Of the 14 wanting supplemental land, 11 were dairymen, two had fruit and vegetables, and one was a part-time farmer.

The three who wanted complete farms were equally divided between preferring to rent, preferring to buy, and willing to do either. Of those who

[1]Farmers wanting land were counted in terms of the number of independent farm businesses represented. Sometimes within a single farm business there was more than one adult male operator such as a father and one or more sons.

wanted supplemental land, the majority preferred to rent. Probably the numbers are too small for the preferences to be of much significance, but it may be that farmers consider the more complete control that goes with ownership to be more essential for the farmstead and their principal acreage than for supplemental acreages.

2. Farmers' Attitudes Toward Lease Terms

Farmers indicated that the rent they would be willing to pay and the improvements they would be willing to make would depend considerably on their estimates of the present and potential productivity of particular pieces of land. Most thought that, on a fair grade of land on which the hay was running out, they could get most of the benefit of their fitting, fertilizer, and seed over a five-year period. Some might want more than five years if alfalfa were considered. Pasture was a little more difficult problem in Greenland and Stratham if it required fencing; farmers thought some pastures (probably those with considerable brush and stones) would not pay for the fence in five years, even if the pasture could be had rent free, and the fence wire would not be worth anything if taken down. On the other hand, some farmers in Hopkinton thought pasture fence was frequently not too much of a problem because a barbed wire on top the usual stone wall was sufficient. Farmers were more reluctant to make the longer-lived fixed improvements. This is as expected, but it poses a problem when it is recalled that some owners were unwilling or unable to make these improvements.

There appears, then, considerable basis for owners and operators to get together to permit improvements for crop production, but there may be cases in which it would be difficult to find a way to handle fencing and more permanent improvements. Considerable exception can be made to both of these general statements, however. In the large number of cases where the owners of idle land are uncertain, they do not want to give long leases, and without some assurance of long use farmers do not want to make land improvements. The permanent improvements may be a problem in only a minor number of cases because probably the majority of the larger places on which the owner would not make improvements could not be rented as farm units anyway due to the current use of the houses.

Expressed Land Needs

If there were hope of agreement on rental terms, to what extent could the present active farmers use the currently idle farm land? To be considered are: (1) the kinds and amount wanted and available, and (2) the location of farmers wanting land in relation to the idle land. The relative location of active dairy farms and idle land is shown on the maps in Chapter II.

In Hopkinton one man wanted to buy a family size dairy farm but the interviewer did not encounter such a farm for sale there. In Greenland and Stratham one man wanted to rent and one would rent or buy a dairy farm. There were no really good opportunities in the way of entire farms to rent, not because of lack of land but because of *lack of suitable buildings available* to the renter. Houses were generally occupied by the owners and barns were generally small, inconvenient, or badly deteriorated. There were some farms for sale but, because of residential values, a buyer would have to exercise considerable care to avoid overpaying for an inadequate farm.

In Greenland and Stratham the active farmers (including the 11 farmers on 8 farmsteads who wanted supplemental land) and the idle places were

fairly well distributed over the two towns. Generally speaking, the idle places were not out of reach of farmers who had indicated that they could travel a few miles to use desirable hay land or young stock pasture. Some farmers had said, however, they could not haul manure far. One difficulty in heavily residential towns, such as Greenland and Stratham, is so many of the old farmsteads are taken up for nonfarmer residential use that there are hardly enough farmsteads left to serve as operating bases for active farmers who might use the idle land on other places as supplemental acreages. It is difficult to get any very definite idea of just how much land a farmer might need, especially because of differences in the productivity of land. The interviewer's *estimate* is that the operating farmers of Greenland and Stratham who want more land might use half or more of the available unused land. It was encouraging to find in Greenland and Stratham that a few of the better farms had recently been bought by progressive young farmers. These men constitute a considerable part of the demand for supplemental land.

The problem of matching farmers' land needs against unused land in Hopkinton is somewhat more difficult. The greatest number of places with some idle farm land are in parts of the town where there are few active farmers. Most of the active farms are in or near the north central valley area, while most of the inactive places are in the hills of the south and east parts of the town. Generally speaking, farmers showed interest in either large or small pieces nearby but only in the larger, better pieces when they were a few to several miles away. It seems probable that most of the more attractive pieces could be used by the farmers indicating a need for land (assuming they knew of its availability and could agree on terms), but some of the smaller pieces in more isolated areas, agriculturally speaking, may not be used.

In a town such as Gilmanton we might expect that a large proportion of the idle places will not be used by present active farmers. The active farmers are too few in relation to the number of idle places, and the island-like areas with some farming are too far apart to expect much of the idle land in one area to be used by farmers from another or for the farmers in these "islands" to go far out into the predominantly nonagricultural area. There may, however, be more places in Gilmanton on which active farmers could become established either on farm units or on farms to be supplemented by outside land.

Summary of Chapter III

Most of the idle places are too small for complete dairy farms and suitable buildings often are not available to a renter on the larger places. Hence most of the idle places could be used only as supplemental land for farmers having their farmsteads elsewhere.

Owners gave these reasons for not currently renting for active farm use (in order of frequency): there was no demand for land to rent, theirs was already rented for partial use, they were mistrustful of renters, they might farm in the future, they make partial use of their land currently, their place is for sale, they are undecided about the future of their property, it is in an unsettled estate, it is leased to an inactive farmer, or renting is not worthwhile.

About a third of the owners said they were willing to rent and several more might be persuaded by assurance that their particular interests would be protected.

Most of the owners had little idea as to the rent they would want. This apparently was related to lack of knowledge of farming and of the rental market. Owners were usually unwilling, disinterested, or unable to make improvement needed for farm use.

There were a few farmers interested in obtaining complete farm units and several interested in obtaining supplemental land. These farmers could use perhaps half the idle land in the same towns.

Farmers were generally willing to seed and fertilize if they could have leases long enough to receive the full benefit of these improvements. They were more reluctant about the more permanent types of improvements.

The interviewer gained the impression that the use of idle farm land might be considerably facilitated by: (1) providing lists of available land and interested farmers, and (2) qualified third persons assisting owners and farmers to work out suitable rental agreements. The latter seems needed because owners and farmers are often reluctant to approach the other, because owners often know little about agriculture, because rental terms are not well established, and because of the highly varied interests of the owners which the rental terms must consider.

Chapter IV. Current Renting Practices

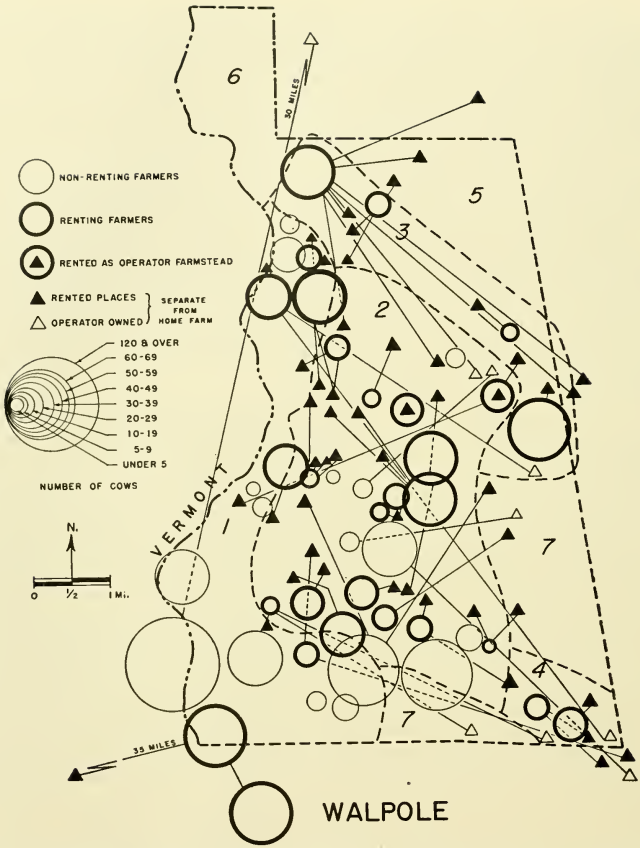
We have seen that there is considerable idle farm land, that much of it cannot easily be gotten into farm use by purchase, and that there seems to be some basis for renting but that there are some obstacles in the way of the most desirable rental agreements. The next step seemed to be to find out what is going on in the way of renting in order to further evaluate and make recommendations regarding renting as a means of using land now idle or partially idle. Toward this end the active farmers of the Towns of Walpole and Derry were questioned on their practices and attitudes regarding the use of land owned by others. Walpole was selected as a Connecticut River Valley town with a vigorous agriculture but with considerable nonfarmer ownership by both local people and outsiders. Derry was selected as a nonvalley town with a somewhat less vigorous agriculture and with considerable idle land mostly under local ownership.

Nearly all of the active farmers (of kinds of farms using much land) were contacted. Approximately two-thirds of these farmers were using other persons' land in some manner and many of them were using more than one piece. The extent and nature of renting and of rental terms were analyzed. Because the kinds of renting and of rental terms were so diverse and the number of cases relatively few, it seemed necessary to carry the analysis into more detailed terms than may be of interest to the general reader. Consequently, only the summary and maps are presented here. The details of the analysis are given in the Appendix.

Summary of Current Renting

Many farmers are making some use of land owned by others. Although no systematic study was made of the ownership of rented land, it appears to be quite similar to that of the idle land. In fact, there is some overlapping since land on which standing hay is sold is included in both groups.

Distances of a few miles do not stop farmers from using desirable land for young stock pasture, hay, or cultivated crops. Most farmers have enough of their machinery on rubber tires to make such moves quite possible. Moves



Map 7. Pattern of renting in the town of Walpole. Dairy opportunity areas are numbered from 1, the best, to 7, the poorest.

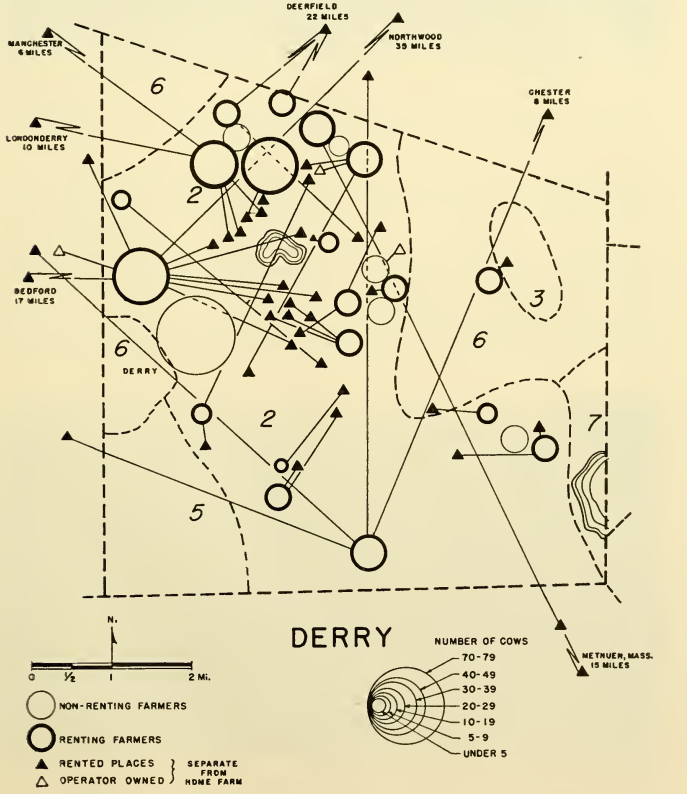
are not without cost in time and machine wear, however. The result is that farmers are inclined to use only the larger, more productive fields as the travel distance increases. This means that pieces of say three acres, in a good farming area, will be used, but a piece five miles up in the hills might have to be at least ten acres to attract a user.

Probably we may generalize from the differences observed between Walpole and Derry that, other things equal, there is more renting and more intensive use of rented land in towns with more vigorous agriculture; that is, having numerous farms of good size.

Another major generalization about renting is that it is very imperfect. Much use of others' land is very light — buying standing hay is too light

to even maintain land in agriculture in the long run. Part of this light land use probably is a carry-over of old methods of farming. But there are often obstacles in the way of progressive farmers who want to use rented land more intensively. The heart of the problem is in land improvement without which most New England land cannot profitably be farmed. For several reasons associated with the nonfarmer ownership of farm land, land improvements, especially on pieces of less than farm unit size, are made by the renter if they are made at all. Since the renter's investment is seldom adequately protected even by long term leases, renters tend to go light on such improvements and perhaps use less rented land than they otherwise could. There does not seem to be any easy solution to this problem.

Any method of increasing owners' and operators' awareness of the desirability of more intensive use of worthwhile land should help. Likewise



Map 8. Pattern of renting in the town of Derry. Dairy opportunity areas are numbered from 1, the best, to 7, the poorest.

Figure 7. Large, level fields near active dairy farms are more apt to be used than smaller, more remote fields. This fie'd of about 20 acres on an unoccupied farm appeared to be yielding less than one ton per acre. Un'ess ferti ized and reseeded, its hay soon will not be worth the cost of horvesting alone.

any method of increasing the general awareness of agreements under which improvements may be made should help. Also, because problems are often highly individual, agencies servicing agriculture should offer their help toward working out the most satisfactory arrangements possible for individual situations. It is hoped that this bulletin will be of help both toward increasing the general understanding and toward anticipating the problems to be solved in individual situations.

The frequent existing cases of very light use of others' land are in *themselves* some obstacle to more intensive use. There is a tendency on the

Figure 8. Farmers sometimes rent pasture several mi'es away. The per acre carrying capacity of this large idle pasture is low. Most of this fie'd cou'd be improved by bush and bog harrowing, ferti.izing, and reseeding. Otherwise in o very few yeors it can only be rec'aimed after a complete clearing job.

part of both owners and would-be renters to respect the partial user's future rights to a piece of land even though no lease or oral commitment is involved.

Another difficulty in the way of renting is the lack of a well-established rental market. This is probably partly a matter of renting not being highly developed historically in New England, but it is also due to highly variable worth of the land and to the peculiar interests of some owners. It is hoped that the review of current rental terms (see Appendix), though limited, may provide a somewhat clearer picture of the market.

Chapter V. The Public and Private Interest In New Hampshire's Idle Farm Land

The Public Interest

Is this land needed in agriculture? A free market measure of "need" is that agricultural products be in sufficient demand to command the use (pay the price) of land and associated production costs. This study indicates that largely residential uses have in a sense outbid agriculture for this land, although the process has been as much one of default by agriculture. This study also suggested that the present uses (mostly residential) do not in many cases exclude agricultural use. It also indicates that some farmers believe they can pay the "secondary" use price (rent) of this land and the associated production costs (provided their investments are protected by satisfactory leases).

Is there evidence that *all or large amounts* of this land is needed in agriculture in the sense that its products will cover their production costs, including an income to farmers equal to their long run alternatives? Table 16 indicates that in the 20 towns studied, idle tillable land was about 17 percent as much as total tillable land reported by the 1945 Census. If we assumed that this land (through the sale of standing hay) is now yielding one-half the state average, then using it so as to bring it up to the state average

Figure 9. Renting of complete commercial size farms is not common in New Hampshire, but there are instances, such as the above, where it is done successfully. This arrangement may be mutually beneficial between owners of adequate farms who are unable to operate them and able operators who lack capital.

Table 16. Idle and Partially Idle Tillable Land Compared With Total Tillable Land in Twenty Towns

County	Town	1945 Census Data				Data of This Study		Per cent Idle and Nearly Idle Tillable Acres of This Study are of Total Tillable from Census
		No. of Farms*	Total Tillable Acres in Farms†	Cropland Idle		Tillable Land Idle or Nearly so, 1948		
				Farms Reporting	Acres	Places Reported	Acres	
Belknap	Belmont	101	3,286	4	21	17	495	15.1
	Gilmanton	118	3,084	5	61	37	1,303	42.3
	Sanbornton	112	3,013	4	50	14	282	9.4
	Tilton	76	1,492	8	131	7	195	13.1
Carroll	Conway	138	3,409	5	74	8	451	13.2
Cheshire	Chesterfield	103	2,766	6	187	14	390	14.1
	Walpole	93	5,920	15	518	30	733	12.4
Coos	Jefferson	88	4,125	2	6	12	275‡	6.7‡
	Lancaster	144	6,873	2	115	10	765	11.1
Grafton	Hanover	123	4,167	2	180	20	773	18.6
	Lebanon	132	5,470	1	25	21	740	13.5
Hillsborough	Wilton	48	1,861	5	131	14	370	19.9
Merrimack	Hopkinton	143	4,341	4	121	25	466	10.7
	Pittsfield	125	2,781	20	331	17	678	24.4
Rockingham	Derry	173	3,440	5	120	34	1,207	35.1
	Greenland	58	2,770	7	93	11	1,322§	20.6§
	Stratham	99	3,654	7	43	25		
Strafford	Madbury	80	2,997	0	0	15	725	24.2
	Strafford	172	3,649	37	881	22	810	22.2
Sullivan	Cornish	159	4,310	1	8	24	645	15.0
Total of 20 towns		2,285	73,408	140	3,096	377	12,620	——
Average of 20 towns		114.3	3,670.4	7	154.8	18.9	631	17.2

*The Census counted as a farm any place on which some agricultural operations were performed if the place had at least three acres of land or if its agricultural products in 1944 were valued at $250.00 or more.

†Total tillable land in farms includes cropland harvested, crop failure, cropland idle, and pasture plowed within 7 years.

‡Acreage on one place not obtained.

§Total for Greenland and Stratham.

would increase roughage on tillable land by 8.5 percent. Idle non-tillable pasture probably is less than 17 percent of all non-tillable pasture so the total production increase would be somewhat less than 8.5 percent. Moderately heavy use of fertilizer and other recommended practices could result in much higher production than the state average, but there is little reason to assume these acres would be used more intensively than the average.

It is commonly believed that in dairying, the chief agricultural use of land in New Hampshire, roughage yields per acre are being greatly increased. This, however, is only one of the important changes taking place in dairy farming. Another is that the possible size of farm per man has expanded, especially where modern field machinery can be used to an advantage. (Idle tillable land is meant to include only such land.) Some farm management specialists take about 30 cows per man as a figure at which a progressive young man might aim. Actually, in 1944 nearly 94 percent of New Hampshire dairy farms milked less than 30 cows and about 75 percent milked less than 20 cows.[1] Corresponding figures for New England were 85 and 65 percent. Herds of less than 30 cows were producing 83 percent of the milk sold by New Hampshire dairy farms. Herds of less than 20 cows were producing 51 percent of that sold. Informal observation in this study indicated a strong tendency for small herds (say 5 to 10 cows) to have either disappeared or (less frequently) become larger in the period of 1938 to 1948. Herds of less than about 20 cows are probably too small to pay all costs and furnish the farmer with a satisfactory income.

The effect of these changes on the supply and price of milk and other farm products would take place through a complicated series of adjustments difficult to predict and describe except as to their general direction. If all farms of less than 20 cows were to cease operation in, say, the next 10 years, milk production could be maintained by higher production of the present 20 and over cow farms (through heavier use of fertilizer and heavier grain feeding) and by a widening of the entire milkshed serving the Northeast. It seems likely that higher milk prices would be necessary to maintain the supply by these means.

There is a third alternative which may contribute to maintaining the supply with less dependence on higher prices. Many small farms, some now idle and some apt to become idle, have some resources, principally land, suitable for farming. If this land can be made available, we may retain more farms and more production in the New England area. We appear to be in a situation of transition where small farms must grow or cease to operate but where it is possible to use land farther from the farmstead in order to build out a farm to adequate size. So, to avoid some unnecessary rise in the cost of milk and of some other farm products, the public has an interest in making available suitable land for farm use.

The above paragraph indicates it probably would be uneconomic to have some of this land out of agriculture. It should not be overlooked that in some cases the *process* of taking small farms out of production may itself be even more wasteful and should be avoided unless it is toward a highly desirable end. If farmers are gradually forced off inadequate sized farms, it means that in addition to undergoing personal hardships, they and their equipment are being inefficiently employed and are contributing less to the total product of society than they could if they had enough suitable land

[1]Calculated from unpublished sample data of the U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Figure 10. In some cases farmers are clearing difficult land (above) while there is good open idle land nearby (below). Probably the renting farmer, the owner of the land, and the public would all benefit if the idle land in such cases were sold or rented to the operating farmer.

to be fully and effectively employed. Probably not all present small farms can be sufficiently and economically expanded by the addition of land on other farms. However, there may be enough which can be expanded by this means to take care of a large part of those operators who are relatively young and interested in a larger business.

There is also a somewhat different reason for encouraging a process of making idle farm land available to farmers. That is that *some* land now idle or nearly so is *better* than some land now in use. There would be a gain in farm production efficiency by merely *substituting* this for some *less* desirable land now in use.

Thus there are three general ways by which farm production efficiencies and lower costs may be achieved through making suitable land available to farmers, and in the long run consumers should benefit by less expensive farm products than they would otherwise have. It should be emphasized again, however, that we are not considering *all* idle land but only that suitable for modern farming. Also some of that physically suitable may not be taken due to bad location or other reasons. What *can* be done

is to make physically suitable land available so that farmers who may need it will have the opportunity to make arrangements for using it. Many changes in farm organization and operation are underway in New England. Making suitable land available should help toward recombining agricultural resources in the most efficient manner.

The Private Interest

In a free enterprise economy the decisions as to *just what land* will be used are mostly made by individuals. Present and potential productivity, ease of tillage, size of field, and location are some of the things which tend to influence what will be farmed and what will not. Individual owners will have to make judgments as to whether their agricultural properties are worth further investment. Individual farmers will have to decide whether they can profit by improving and farming land available to them. Agricultural specialists, including county agents and other extension service representatives, can help with these decisions. Farmers in particular circumstances may profitably use land which others could not. *Furthermore, in the adoption of new ways, including heavier forage production and the enlargement of herds, those who act first benefit most.* A farmer should strive to get good land and he cannot afford to use land that is too bad. But if he is short of land, he can afford to use less than the best, especially if he is in the forefront of those adopting sound new methods and expanding output.

1. How Individual Farmers May Benefit

There are two general groups of farmers who may benefit from the use of idle land: the present operators of small farms and the young men short of capital who want to become farmers. As noted above, 75 percent of New Hampshire dairy farms were milking less than 20 cows and 94 percent less than 30 cows. The operators of these farms, if able-bodied and good managers, should be interested in expansion. When the obstacle is limited land on their home farms they should thoroughly examine the possibilities of obtaining land from the idle or nearly idle places within a radius of several miles. There is some tendency for the idle pieces to be more numerous in the areas where there are the most small farms.

It is well known that a modern commercial farm represents a considerable investment. A 20-cow New Hampshire dairy farm stocked and equipped probably represents an investment in excess of $20,000 at 1950 prices, and a farm of 30 cows an investment in excess of $30,000. Many young men interested and qualified by training cannot readily raise even the down payment for such a farm. A few of them may be able to start as managers or as renters of farm units. More of them may be able to get a start through intelligent use of family resources. In farm families the boys may be given some share in the family business proportionate to their work and investment. As the boys are able to do more work the farm business may be expanded. In some cases this may be done by renting idle land to support a larger herd. By the time the sons are ready to set up independent households, their assets, accumulated on a home farm base, may be at least enough to enable them to borrow the remainder needed to become established on an independent farm — which might be a rented farm or an owned farmstead supplemented by some rented land. The renting of land to supplement the home farm thus becomes a means of helping young men

over the extremely difficult hurdle of obtaining the initial capital needed to even secure adequate credit.

2. How Individual Owners May Benefit

How and to what extent owners of idle farm land may benefit from its use depends on what their particular farm resources are and on their particular interests in owning rural property. Persons owning potential farm units or large pieces of productive land, of course, have opportunity for greater monetary gain than those owning places with only a few acres of farm land. Those owning the larger places especially stand to gain in two ways by having their places farmed: in the first place, the farm may provide current income from production: in the second place, intelligent use can increase a farm's selling value, whereas a New England farm that is idle does not stand still in value but rapidly depreciates.

These points about current income and future selling value, of course, also apply to the *agricultural* assets of the smaller places. However, with the smaller places the agricultural assets are more often secondary. Whether the place is large or small, if the agricultural assets are of secondary value it cannot be expected that the place will yield a profit over its *nonfarm* expenses. It may be possible, however, for the farm earnings to reduce the cost of maintaining a summer home, for example. Rent from the use of hay land may pay the taxes or the farmer may do some maintenance work on the buildings or grounds in exchange for use of the land. But where the agricultural value of a place is small it may not be worth much rent, at least until it has been improved, so the owner may have to look largely to nonmonetary benefits, including a better view and some fire protection when fields surrounding the house are kept open, better relations with farmer neighbors, and an increased appreciation of the ways of agriculture.

One reason why nonfarmer-owned farm property goes unused or unimproved is that some of the owners, especially city people and women heirs of farmers, just do not know what should be done to secure the best income from a farm. These people should seek advice from qualified persons, including good farmers, their county agricultural agent, and their college of agriculture, or else sell their farms or farm land to someone who does know how to use it. If they do not make intelligent use of New England farm land, its agricultural value will surely depreciate rapidly.

In some cases older farmers gradually retire on the farm and as they do so their farms deteriorate in appearance and value. Owners of adequate commercial size farms, as they approach this stage, would be better off if they sold or rented their farms to younger men. In the case of some smaller, less productive farms, the semi-retired farmer *may* have a higher income by remaining on his farm, working as much as he is able, and not fully maintaining his buildings; that is, using up some of his capital. Even in such cases, however, it might be better for the owner to do a fairly intensive job on a part of his farm and sell or rent the remainder. For instance, a dairyman who has reached the stage where he is no longer able to fully operate his farm might be better off to keep, say, ten cows, and rent out his hay land rather than keep five cows and only half operate his land with his own inadequate labor. Even though he had to buy hay (in excess of that which he might receive as rent) his net income should be higher because his land, buildings, and labor are more effectively used.

Summary of Chapter V

A COMPLEX SERIES of adjustments are taking place in New England agriculture. Small farms are being enlarged or abandoned as farms, even though they may have some suitable farm land. A greater number of small farms may have the opportunity to expand to economic size if suitable land now idle or apt to become idle on other small farms can be made available. Small farms contribute an important part to total New England farm production. Hence the public, as consumers of farm products, should be interested in making suitable farm land available to farmers who can use it economically.

Individual farmers and owners of idle land often have possibilities of increasing their incomes through the use of idle land. Operators of undersized farms and young men short of capital with which to start farming especially may use such land advantageously. Owners of worthwhile idle land have opportunities to increase current income, decrease costs of ownership, and maintain the sale value of their property through allowing farmers to make productive use of it.

Appendix

Renting Practices and Terms in the Towns of Walpole and Derry

Extent and Nature of Current Renting in the Town of Walpole

FORTY-FOUR, nearly all, of the active farmers were contacted. Twenty-eight, well over half, of them were making some use of land owned by other persons. It was not uncommon for a farmer to be using several separate places and to be using places for several purposes. Some individual places were used for a single purpose while others were used for two or more. Among the 28 farmers using others' land, 20 were renting pasture, 11 were renting hay land, four were buying standing hay, three were renting for cultivated crops, and two were operating rented farms as their complete or principal farm units.

Table 1. Number of Farmers "Renting" Land for Various Uses in the Town of Walpole, 1949*

Total number of farmers contacted	44
Number of farmers using others' land in some manner	28
Number of farmers buying standing hay	4
Number of farmers using rented land for all purposes *other than buying standing hay*	27
Number of farmers renting hay land	11
Number of farmers renting land for cultivated crops	3†
Number of farmers renting pasture	20
Number of farmers operating on or from a rented farm	2‡

*Does not include operation of farms by hired managers or caretakers of which there were five cases.

†Grain, silage corn, and vegetables were the crops.

‡The hay, pasture, and crop land of the "home" rented farm of these two farmers is not included in the figures for farmers renting land for hay, pasture, and crops.

The lines of movement by renters run from the active farms mostly in the western and southwestern parts to the small nonfarm places in the midst of the farming areas, to somewhat larger nonfarmer owned places on the outer fringe of the farming areas, and into the predominantly nonfarming area with its sprinkling of abandoned farms. Pastures are rented principally for young stock. They may be on *any* nonfarmer owned land, but many of them are far up in the hills on the remaining open land of otherwise long abandoned farms. Most farmers rented only one place for pasture, but two farmers each rented three places. The size of rented pastures ranged from less than five to 200 acres. Seven of the 24 whose acreages were obtained contained over 50 acres each. Many of these pastures apparently had very low carrying power. Those with more than 10 acres were pastured at the rate of one animal on from three to 12.5 acres. Over half of the places pastured were within a mile of the renter's farmstead, but five were more than four miles away and one was 35 miles away.

Only about half as many farmers rented hay land as rented pasture. Most of these rented only one piece, but three farmers rented three pieces

Table 2. Number of Places "Rented" per Farmer, Town of Walpole, 1949*

Kind of land used	Number of Places "Rented" per Farmer										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	"Some"
	Number of Farmers Using Above Number of Places											
Bought standing hay (total 4 places)	38	4										
Rented hay land (total 21 places)	31	7		3		1						
Rented for cultivated crops (total 6 places)	39	2			1							
Rented pasture (total 27 places)	23	15	3	2								

*Exclusive of two farms rented as the operators' home units.

each and one farmer rented five pieces. Rented hay land was apt to be on the small pieces within or the somewhat larger pieces on the fringe of the areas of frequent commercial farms. Almost half (nine) of the pieces of rented hay land were between 10 and 25 acres, but five pieces were of five acres or less and five were of 30 acres or more. Probably some of the larger places were broken up into more than one field. Eleven of the 21 pieces of rented hay land were within a mile of the renter's farmstead and none was as much as three miles away.

Only four farmers reported buying standing hay. In so far as we can talk about the characteristics of so small a number they are similar to the rented hay cases, except that none of those buying standing hay reported buying more than one piece and one piece was farther away from the buyers farmstead (5-6 miles) than were any of the rented hay lands.

For cultivated crops two farmers each rented a few acres nearby, one for silage, the other for vegetables. A third farmer rented four pieces, averaging 12 acres each and from one to five miles away, to raise dairy grain.

Both of the rented farm units were commercial size dairy farms. In one case the rented farm is the operator's complete unit except that he lives in his own house nearby; he uses the rented farm's barns. In the other case the operator lives on the main rented farm but rents some supplemental pasture and crop land.

Extent and Nature of Current Renting in the Town of Derry

Again nearly all the active farmers were contacted. Slightly more than two-thirds, as compared to more than one-half in Walpole, were using other people's land in some manner. However, just half (15 of 30) of the Derry farmers were using rented land in ways other than buying standing hay, whereas somewhat more than half (27 of 44)) were doing so in Walpole. About half (14 of 30) of the farmers were buying standing hay in Derry as compared to less than one-tenth (4 of 44) in Walpole. Thus we can say that a somewhat higher proportion of the active farmers in Derry were making some use of other people's land but a larger part of this total use was a very light form — one which is regarded as too light to keep the land in agriculture in the long run.

Buying standing hay was the most numerous single use of others' land in Derry. Six bought hay on only one place, but three each bought on three places and one bought on four. The 14 pieces for which the size was given

Table 3. Size of Places "Rented," Town of Walpole, 1949*

Kind of land used	Size of Places in Acres†											
	0–5	6–10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26–30	31–35	36–40	41–45	46–50	51 and over	Not given
	Number of Places in Each Size Group											
Standing hay bought (total 4 places)			1			1	1					1
Rented hay land (total 21 places)	5	1	2	4	3		1	3			1	1
Rented for cultivated crops (total 6 places)	1	3			1							1
Rented pasture (total 27 places)	3	1	4	2	1	2	1	3			7‡	3

*Exclusive of two farms rented as operators' home units.
†Larger places may not all be in one field.
‡Approximate sizes and numbers of head pastured on places 51 acres and over are: 200 A., 30 head; 100 A., 30 head; 75 A., 15 head; 100 A., 10-15 head; 65 A., 9 head; 125 A., 10 head; 85 A., number of head unknown.

Table 4. Distance from Operators Farmstead to Places Rented, Town of Walpole, 1949*

Kind of land used	Distance in Miles										
	0–.9	1.–1.9	2.–2.9	3.–3.9	4.–4.9	5.–5.9	6.–6.9	7.–7.9	8.–8.9	9.–9.9	10 and over	Not given
	Number of Places in Each Distance Group											
Standing hay bought (total 4 places)	1	2				1						
Rented hay land (total 21 places)	11	4	6									
Rented for cultivated crops (total 6 places)	2	1		1	1	1						
Rented pasture (total 27 places)	16	3	2		2	2					1†	1

*Exclusive of two farms rented as the operators' home units.
†Distance to pasture 10 and over miles was 35 miles.

Table 5. Number of Farmers "Renting" Land for Various Uses in the Town of Derry, 1949*

Total number of farmers contacted	30
Number of farmers using others' land in some manner	21
Number of farmers buying standing hay	14
Number of farmers using rented land for all purposes *other than buying standing hay*	15
Number of farmers renting hay land	7
Number of farmers renting land for cultivated crops	5
Number of farmers renting pasture	8
Number of farmers operating on or from a rented farm	0

*Does not include operation of farms by hired managers or caretakers of which one case was found.

ranged up to 120 acres, but half of them were 10 acres or less, and probably the larger pieces were in more than one field. Distances from the renters' farmsteads were obtained for seventeen pieces. Most of these were from one to two and from four to five miles distant, although one was 14 miles away. Not only was buying standing hay more common in Derry than in Walpole, but some farmers rented more pieces and some went farther to get it.

Slighdy less than one-fourth (7 of 30) of the Derry farmers rented hay land, about the same proportion as in Walpole (11 of 44). Most farmers rented only one piece and none rented more than two. The size of these pieces ranged from less than 5 to 25 acres, but most were of from 6 to 20 acres. Most pieces of rented hay land were less than two miles from the renter's farmstead. Derry farmers renting hay land rented somewhat fewer pieces per farmer, somewhat smaller pieces, and traveled somewhat shorter distances to their rented pieces as compared with Walpole farmers. This is another indication that tillable rented land tends to be used less intensively in Derry.

Table 6. Number of Places "Rented" per Farmer, Town of Derry, 1949

	Number of Places "Rented" per Farmer											
Kind of land used	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	"Some"
	Number of Farmers Using Above Number of Places											
Bought standing hay (total 24 places)	16	6	1	3	1							3
Rented hay land (total 9 places)	23	5	2									
Rented for cultivated crops (total 9 places)	25	4				1						
Rented pasture (total 10 places)	22	6	2									

A little more than one-fourth (8 of 30) of Derry farmers reported renting pasture as compared to nearly one-half in Walpole. Most farmers in Derry, as in Walpole, rented only one place for pasture. Of the pieces whose sizes were given, none were under 26 acres in Derry whereas 11 of the 20 in Walpole were under 26 acres. Six of the nine pastures whose distances were reported were more than 10 miles away. So in Derry fewer

Table 7. Size of Places "Rented," Town of Derry, 1949

Kind of land used	Size of Places in Acres*											
	0–5	6–10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26–30	31–35	36–40	41–45	46–50	51 and over	Not given
	Number of Places in Each Size Group											
Standing hay bought (total 24 places)	3	4	2				1	1			3†	10
Rented hay land (total 9 places)	1	3	2	2	1							
Rented for cultivated crops (total 9 places)	8		1									
Rented pasture (total 10 places)						2			1	1	1	5‡

*Larger places may not all be in one field.

†Approximate sizes of places where 51 and over acres of standing hay was bought are: 70 A., 55 A., and 120 A.

‡Rented pastures for which size was not given averaged 7.6 head per place and 9.5 head per renter.

Table 8. Distance from Operators Farmstead to Places Rented, Town of Derry, 1949.

Kind of land used	Distance in Miles										
	0–.9	1.–1.9	2.–2.9	3.–3.9	4.–4.9	5.–5.9	6.–6.9	7.–7.9	8.–8.9	9.–9.9	10 and over	Not given
	Number of Places in Each Distance Group											
Standing hay bought (total 24 places)	1	6	1		5	1	2				1*	7
Rented hay land (total 9 places)	2	4		1								2
Rented for cultivated crops (total 9 places)	3		1					1				4
Rented pasture (total 10 places)	1	1							1		6†	1

*Distance of 10 miles and over to buy standing hay was 15 miles.

†Distances to pasture 10 and over were: 23, 17, 15, 22, 22, and 11 miles.

farmers were renting pasture but most of these were going farther and a larger proportion were renting larger pastures. Derry does not have the mountainous areas with scattered abandoned farms that permitted considerable pasture renting only a few miles from the renter's farmstead in Walpole. Some of the pastures rented by Derry farmers were on abandoned farms in the less agricultural areas of neighboring towns.

Only one-sixth (5 of 30) of Derry farmers rented land for cultivated crops. Four of these rented only one piece each, and from two to four acres in size, for silage corn, potatoes, and other vegetables. Three of these four were within a mile and the fourth within two miles of the renter's farmstead. The fifth farmer rented five pieces for potatoes and silage ranging from three to 15 acres in size and up to seven miles from his farmstead. Except for the fifth farmer, renting for cultivated crops was very small scale in Derry as it was in Walpole.

No farmers were found to be operating on or from rented farmsteads in Derry, and there was only one farm operated by a hired manager.

Table 9. Money Rents in the Towns of Walpole and Derry, 1949*

Kind of Renting	Walpole			Derry		
	Number of Rentals Reported	Range in Amounts	Most Usual Amount	Number of Rentals Reported	Range in Amounts	Most Usual Amount
		dollars	dollars		dollars	dollars
Standing hay bought†	4	0-12.50 per T.	5.00 per T.	8	4.00-10.00 per T.	5.00 per T.
Rented hay land‡	15	0-4.00 per A.	2.50 per A.	4	1.00†† per A.	None evident
Rented for cultivated crops§	6	0-7.50 per A.	None evident	7	0-7.00 per A.	None evident
Rented pasture||	16	0-5.00 per head	2.25 per head	4	5.00-10.00 per head	5.00 per head
	(In Walpole, Derry, Greenland, and Stratham)					
Rented farm units¶	4	15.00-58.00** per cow	25.00 per cow			

*Rent was often rendered in nonmoney form, especially services for which the renter was better equipped than the owner. Services were sometimes in addition to the lower money rates.

†Improvements, if any, are made by the owner.

‡Reseeding and fertilizing are generally done by the renter.

§Any land improvements are generally made by the renter.

||Fence maintained and sometimes furnished by the renter. Rent quoted for the pasture season.

¶Buildings, fences, etc., are genererally the responsibility of the owner, except for minor repairs. Land improvements such as lime, fertilizer, and seed may be shared.

**The extreme range of $15 to $58 per milk cow on the rented farm units is *partly* justified by differences in improvements furnished by the owner and by differences in number of young stock relative to milk cows.

††Rent for hay land in Derry was more often in nonmoney terms.

Standing Hay. Only four farmers indicated that they were buying standing hay. This is hardly enough to establish a market had the amounts paid been consistent. The amounts paid ranged from nothing to $12.50 per ton. Two farmers paid in lump sums rather than so much per acre or ton. On a per acre basis the lump sums amounted to $1.67 and $5.00. On a per ton basis the average for these four farms was near $5.00

There were no leases involved in the four instances of buying standing hay. In fact, they are excluded by definition. Had there been leases the arrangement would have been called renting of hay land. This does not mean, however, that there is not some kind of an understanding that the same farmer will get the hay next year.

The only evidence of improvements was that in one case the owner supplied poultry manure.

Rented Hay Land. Ten of the 11 farmers renting hay land reported the amount of rent paid on a total of 15 places. On five places no cash rent at all was paid. For the use of one of these places the renter reported performing some services for the owner. For the 10 places on which cash rent was paid the amount per acre ranged from $.67 to $4.00 with an average of $2.47. This $2.47 is also a fairly representative figure for cases in which any cash rent was paid since the actual figures are distributed fairly evenly on both sides of it. When the cases averaged include the five cases in which no cash rent was paid the average cash rent falls to $1.75 per acre. However, rent was seldom quoted on a per acre basis; it was quoted as a lump sum such as $100 for 40 acres. It should not be expected, of course, that rent would be uniform since there are differences in quality of land and in the rental market in different situations.

In nearly all cases, regardless of whether cash rent was involved, the renter reported that he furnished the seed and fertilizer. Renters also sometimes reported repairing fences and buildings.

In only two cases were written leases reported. One of these was for two years, the other for one. The other agreements were oral and on a year-to-year basis, although in most cases the farmer had continued to rent the places for 5, 10, and even 15 years.

The renter furnished the fertilizer and seed, which appeared to be the extent of the agricultural improvements in most cases. The renter was seldom protected by lease. The natural questions are: Did the renters feel that this combination was too risky? If so, did they rent less than they otherwise would and do less in the way of land improvement than they otherwise would? The evidence was not conclusive on these points. In response to a question as to whether they had suggestions for improving their renting arrangements, several farmers said they would like agreements covering several years. Some of those who had no suggestions might well have preferred longer agreements had they been definitely asked about longer leases. Several farmers said that they were farming the rented land just as they farmed their own. Having used the land for some time in the past they came to feel semi-secure in its future use. Further questioning, however, tended to indicate that they were investing less in fertilizer and seed on the rented places and that they did so at least partly because they felt that their investments were insecure. The man who appeared to be doing the most intensive job on rented land felt that, since he was renting several places, he had spread his

risk sufficiently to warrant making the heavy investments required to grow alfalfa and other heavy yielding crops rather than go along with very light yields.

Cultivated Crops. There was little renting for cultivated crops. One farmer rented two acres for corn silage, one used a part of 20 acres for vegetables (the rest was in hay), and a third farmer rented four pieces totaling 48 acres for grain.

Of this total of six pieces rented for annual crops, cash rent of $2 and $7.50 per acre was paid for two pieces. The rent was actually quoted for the place rather than per acre, however. The renter paid the taxes on a third piece, and on a fourth place the renter provided services in the form of tractor work for the owner. In the two remaining cases there was no indication of rent other than improvements needed for crop production, that is, seed and fertilizer.

For five of the six places the renters indicated that they furnished fertilizer. In one case, the owner, a poultryman, supplied poultry manure.

In no case was there a written lease. In two cases there were oral agreements for three years of use. In three other cases the same farmer had used land three, four, and seven years on a year-to-year basis.

Rented Pastures. Twenty farmers rented a total of 27 places for pasture. The amount of rent paid was obtained for 16 of these places. Of these, two rentals were in the form of services which were not given a value, two more involved no rent beyond fence repairs which were common to nearly all cases of pasture renting, and the remaining 12 involved cash ranging from $1 to $5 per head pastured. All pasture rental is quoted on a pasture season basis. The average per head pastured was $2.77 for the 12 cases in which cash was paid, or $2.38 for the 14 cases (12 cash plus 2 with no rent other than fence repairs). The middle and slightly most frequent figures were $2 to $2.50 per head. Pasture rent was most often in the form of a lump sum for a specific pasture, but it was sometimes quoted on a per head basis and seldom on a per acre basis. Apparently farmers attempted to estimate a pasture's carrying capacity and this varied greatly per acre. In pointing out $2 to $2.50 per head as the middle and most frequent rentals there is no intent to say this should be the figure paid.

In almost every case where information was obtained relative to improvements, the renter took care of fence repairs and sometimes provided the fence. In a few cases the renter also seeded and fertilized. There was no indication that the owner maintained the fence or furnished seed and fertilizer in any instance.

In 20 cases for which the lease arrangement was given, only two were written — these for five years each. The other 18 were oral — only three for more than one year ahead. However, most of them had been rented on a one-year basis for several consecutive years, three of them up to fifteen years.

Complete Farms. There were only two instances of farmers renting farm units as their base of operations and as their only or their main farm resources.

Two cases are hardly enough from which to make general statements regarding rental terms for farm units, and the terms on these two farms differed considerably. On one farm a monthly lump sum cash rental was

paid. In this case the owner made the more permanent type of improvements and furnished lime and fertilizer. The farmer repaired fences, had furnished some fence, cleared brush and stones, furnished seed and paid all operating expenses. There was a five-year written lease with six months' notice required by either party before termination. The owner lives on the farm in the summer and this probably is the main reason for owning it, but he also appeared to be interested in its development as a commercial farm.

In the second instance of a rented farm unit the owner is resident on the farm more of the year and apparently is more interested in preserving than developing the farm. The amount of the rental was not obtained but was indicated to be low, partly because the owner was more interested in careful use of the property than in income from it. (This again emphasizes the need in many cases in New Hampshire to learn the special interests of both parties and to develop a rental agreement which will as far as possible develop and protect the interests of both parties.) In this case there was a two-year lease which had been renewed several times. The renter furnished fertilizer as well as seed, minor repairs, and operating expenses. This farm apparently was being operated considerably below its capacity, as might be expected under such a rental agreement.

Rental Terms in the Town of Derry

Standing Hay. Eight farmers reported the amounts paid. These amounts were most often expressed in dollars per ton on the estimated yield. They ranged from $4 to $10, with $5 the most usual price. The higher prices were sometimes due to bad estimates of yields or to hay of unusually high legume content.

There were no leases, written or oral, although the same farmers sometimes cut hay on the same places for several years.

Usually no improvements (plowing, seeding, or fertilization) were indicated. In one case the poultryman owner manured the field and in another the semi-retired farmer both reseeded and fertilized. It is characteristic that when hay is bought standing, the maintenance of the crop, if any, is up to the owner. When the owner has the equipment, means, and interest he may maintain or improve the stand. Otherwise, and this seems to be the more usual situation, yields decline until the hay is not worth cutting and the field is abandoned.

Rented Hay Land. Seven farmers reported renting hay land. Of these, two paid approximately $1 per acre with one renter also plowing the owner's garden, a third renter paid the taxes, a fourth did some work for the owner, two reported rentals which could not be separated from other land, and one did not report the amount paid. In all cases the renter furnished seed and fertilizer.

In four cases the agreements were oral. Two of these were for one year each, one for three years, and one for five years. Two more probably were oral and were for two and three years. One had a written lease for a two-year period.

Cultivated Crops. Five farmers reported renting land for annual crops. The amount of rent was not given in one case, in another case it was part of a rental sum paid for an entire farm, in one case no rent was paid, in still another the renter paid eight to ten bushels of potatoes for the use of two

acres which he cleared of brush. The largest user of rented land for annual crops paid from $5 to $7 per acre and reseeded at the end of his lease.

In the four cases for which terms were given the renter furnished the fertilizer. Agreements were oral and for one year at a time, although some places had been rented several years by the same farmer.

Rented Pasture. Eight farmers were renting pasture. In three cases the amount of rental was not given. In two other cases the pasture rental was not distinguishable from other rent. The remaining three farmers paid $5 a head for three pieces and $10 for a fourth place. In one case fence furnished by the farmer was counted toward the $5 per head.

Fence repair, and sometimes furnishing the fence, apparently was the renter's responsibility.

Only one lease was written — it was for two years' duration. One oral agreement was for five years and the rest for one year, although some of these one-year agreements had been repeated several times.